
75 years a city

Swift Current, Sask.

A souvenir history edition

Written, edited and designed by
Peter Godfrey

Modern photos by Alexis Wandler
of 'Photography by Alexis'



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FORWARD

A cross-section of local history

Swift Current, the eventual city which grew from a railway stopping point, has a vibrant and exciting history, one which has been told through many books, stories, private manuscripts, articles and reports, by many fine writers.

This book, a souvenir history book, commissioned for Swift Current's 75th Anniversary year since incorporation as a city (1914-1989), is not intended, nor is it charted, as another 'history' edition.

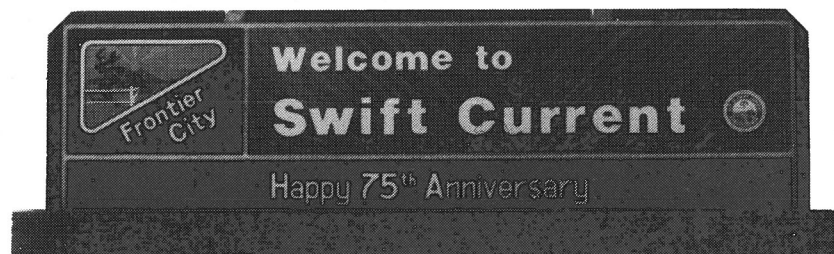
Rather, the pages of this volume are intended to provide a cross-section of notes and photographs that span over 100 years. The pages try to re-live the excitement and personality, the times and conditions of Swift Current's growth and depict the spirit of the people who have lived here.

The edition does not detail history of this prairie community. There is no attempt to record every family, date every building, note every pioneer or prominent citizen, every group or organization, nor pinpoint each step of progress.

Presented is a sketch of the people, happenings, progress, culture and circumstances that made, and make, Swift Current a place with a bright past, and future.

Now, the book is yours, the reader. Enjoy.

Peter Godfrey



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you to many fine people

In gathering data for this Souvenir History Book for Swift Current's 75th Anniversary since Incorporation as a city, many people, and documents, were extremely helpful.

Monty Kersell, reporter at the Swift Current Sun, did much research in a number of areas, including reading through Sun microfilm files.

Hoffman Powley, with his superb collection of old photos and files, and a genuine love of Swift Current's history, was a monumental help. He gave many, many hours of conversation and assistance.

A special thanks to so many who were asked questions and took the time to answer. A special thank you to those who chatted longer, with Mr. Kersell, namely Bill Ford, the late Ridge Booker, Mary Booker, former Fire Chief Art Dale, Jack Smith, Leon Plewis and Vic Jacobsen. And those who helped with specific information, namely, Jim Pratt, Steve Buzinski, Iver Clifton, Vern Tisdale.

The Swift Current Library staff was an

endless source of information to which we are very grateful.

The manuscript prepared a number of years ago by Ted Michie, titled, The History of Swift Current to 1914 was very helpful.

Two major publications by noted historian and former resident of this city, Don C. McGowan, provide the most comprehensive detail of Swift Current's early history. The Grassland Settlers and The Green and Growing Years, helped provide a clear understanding of those early days and are highly recommended reading for everyone.

Providing extensive input into specific topics, such as the world wars, the city's progress through the 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s, were gleamed from the Sun's microfilm.

And, a very special thank you to the members of the 75th Anniversary Committee of City Council for its support from beginning to end.

A complete Bibliography appears at the conclusion of this souvenir book.

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City Council - 1989

Mayor Len Stein
 Ald. John McIntosh
 Ald. Ruth Fiala
 Ald. Glen Christiansen
 Ald. Bill Bowers
 Ald. Paul Elder
 Ald. Stan Horner



Anniversary Committee

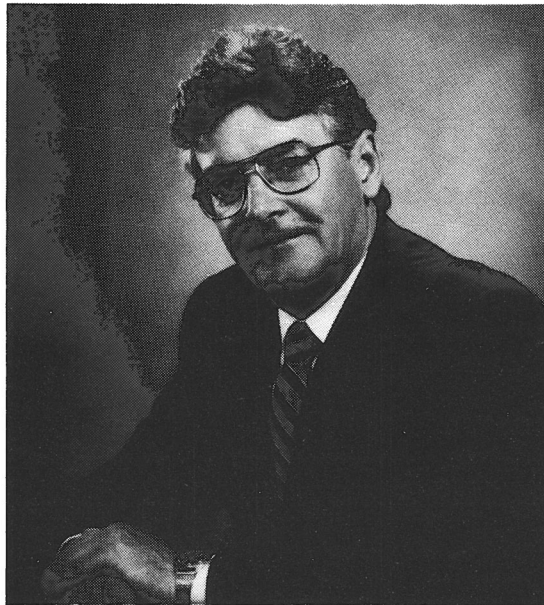
Ald. Stan Horner
 Hoffman Powley
 Paul Rezansoff
 Audrey Yee
 Alexis Wandler
 Ron Munro
 Fern Kruse
 Peter Godfrey
 Carole Stanicky

Mayor's Message

In 1989 the City of Swift Current approaches a milestone in its history. Seventy-five years ago we became incorporated as a City. Many people have come and gone but one thing remains, our pioneer spirit. Our community has progressed with the times, grown, and moved ahead with ideas that have affected not only our City, but Canada and the world. There were times of adversity and prosperity, through them all we have remained strong. We have diversified our local economy through manufacturing and enjoy a thriving industrial base.

To show our pride and how much an event such as our 75th Anniversary means to us, the City of Swift Current, through a committee of devoted individuals has filled 1989 with events to bring our people home to reminisce with friends and family, to reflect on the changes that progress has wrought and to rekindle the pioneering spirit which began in 1914. This book is intended to keep alive the events which form our history. It is a keepsake for those who remember and an experience for those who read it for the first time. Enjoy!

L.A. (Len) Stein
Mayor
City of Swift Current



Mayor Len Stein



Chairman Stan Horner

Chairman's Message

When I was appointed Chairman of a 75th Anniversary year-long celebration, I knew my first task would be to organize a committee of enthusiastic and talented individuals.

Fortunately, this was done and plans were made to involve a cross-section of this community in celebrating their existence in Swift Current for up to 75 years.

This committee focused on organizing a small number of very major events, such as: a January 15th Birthday Party, a July Homecoming and burying a time capsule in December to record a busy year of activities for the benefit of future generations. At the same time, we would encourage and support numerous events all year that were organized by various community groups.

Swift Current has a lot to be proud of and a lot to celebrate!

I sincerely hope all the citizens and visitors enjoy a great year of entertainment, pride and a chance to re-new friends and acquaintances.

Once again, thanks to a super anniversary committee and all the support of the citizens of Swift Current.

Stan Horner
Chairman
Anniversary Committee

They have served Swift Current

. . . Mayors

1904 - Fred Jones	1927-1930 - J.G. Laycock
1905 - J.T. Dodds	1931-1932 - Dr. O.M. Irwin
1906 - J.G. Maxwell	1933-1934 - F.C. Hayes
1907 - Fred Jones	1935-1942 - James Taylor
1908 - Argue	1943-1944 - F.C. Hayes
1909-1912 - A.W. Snider	1945-1952 - W.K. Rutherford
1913 - Argue	1953-1954 - J.E. Friesen
1914-1915 - Frank West	1955-1956 - J. McIntosh, Jr.
1916 - T.W. Hutcheson	1957-1962 - R.C. Dahl
1917 - Wilfred Jones	1963-1966 - J.D. Keene
1918 - Dr. W.H. Field	1967-1973 - R.C. Dahl
1919-1920 - J.A. Rollefson	1974-1979 - J.A. Dyer
1921 - W.S. Yule	1980-1982 - Len Stein
1922-1923 - W.W. Smith	1983-1985 - Al Rittinger
- F.G. Westlake	1986-1988 - Len Stein
1924-1926 - A. Webber	1989- - Len Stein

MLAs — Swift Current

Although Saskatchewan became a province in 1905, the Swift Current Provincial Constituency was not formed until 1908. Walter Scott, who had become Premier and leader of the Liberal Party in 1905, became the ridings first MLA, although he lived in Regina.

During 1907-08 a David Wylie, a Maple Creek rancher, acted as the representative for Swift Current.

These people have served as Provincial Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) for Swift Current:

1908-1917 Walter Scott, Liberal Saskatchewan's first Premier.	1917-1929 David John Sykes, Liberal (1925-29); Independent prior to 1925.	1917-1921 Ira Eugene Argue, Government
	1929-1934 William Wensley Smith, Conservative	1921-1925 Arthur John Lewis, Progressive Conservative
	1934-1944 James Gordon Taggart, Liberal	1925-1940 Charles Edward Bothwell, Liberal
	1944-1956 Harry Gibbs, CCF.	1940-1945 Ray Theodore Graham, Liberal
	1956-1975 Everett Irvine Wood, CCF (1956-1967) New Democratic Party (1967-1975) Cabinet Minister	1945-1949 Thomas John Bentley, CCF.
	1975-1982 Dennis Marvin Ham, Progressive Conservative	1949-1953 Harry B. Whiteside, Liberal
	1982- Patricia Anne Smith, Progressive Conservative. Cabinet Minister.	Swift Current-Maple Creek Riding
		1953-1958 Irvin William Studer, Liberal
		1958-1972 John McIntosh, Progressive Conservative
		1972-1984 Frank Hamilton, Progressive Conservative
		1984-1988 Geoff Wilson, Progressive Conservative
		Swift Current-Maple Creek-Assiniboia Riding
		1988- Geoff Wilson, Progressive Conservative

MPs - Swift Current

These men have served as the Member of Parliament for the Swift Current area, back to 1887. The riding designation changed several times through these years.

Assiniboia West, NWT.

1887-1900	Nicholas Flood Davin (famous newspaperman).
1900-1906	Walter Scott, Liberal (to become first Premier of Saskatchewan).
1906-1914	William Erskine Knowles.

Moose Jaw Riding

1914-1917	William Erskine Knowles, Liberal
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Swift Current Riding

1917-1921	Ira Eugene Argue, Government
1921-1925	Arthur John Lewis, Progressive Conservative
1925-1940	Charles Edward Bothwell, Liberal
1940-1945	Ray Theodore Graham, Liberal
1945-1949	Thomas John Bentley, CCF.
1949-1953	Harry B. Whiteside, Liberal

Swift Current-Maple Creek Riding

1953-1958	Irvin William Studer, Liberal
1958-1972	John McIntosh, Progressive Conservative
1972-1984	Frank Hamilton, Progressive Conservative
1984-1988	Geoff Wilson, Progressive Conservative

Swift Current-Maple Creek-Assiniboia
Riding

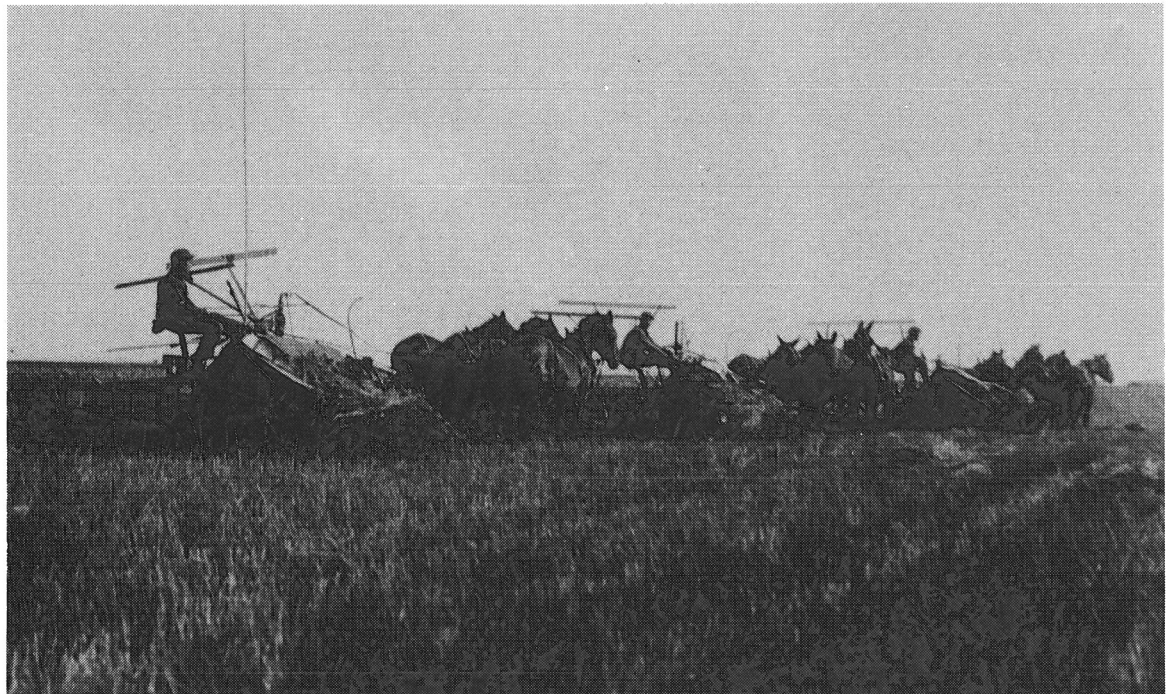
1988-	Geoff Wilson, Progressive Conservative
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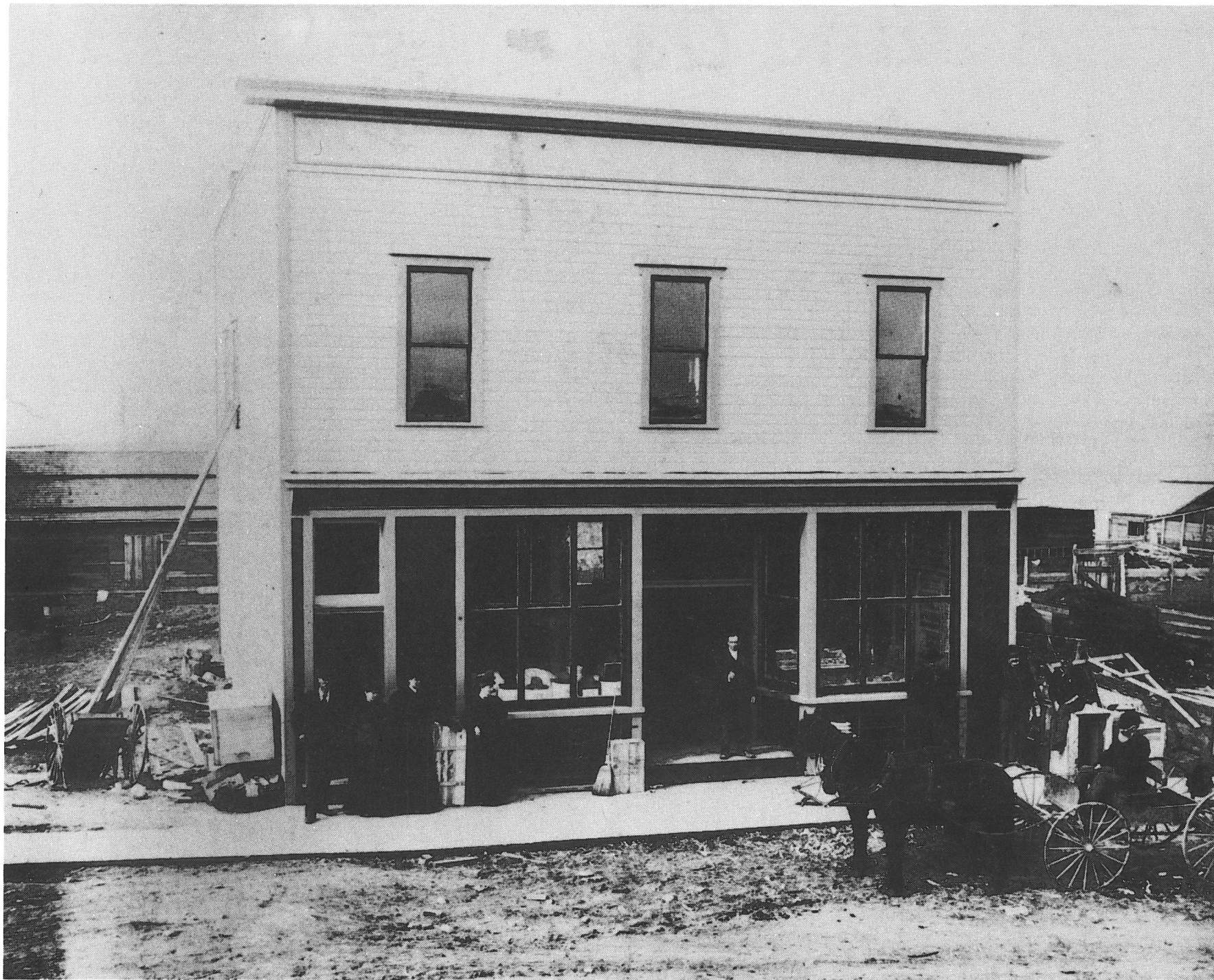


Early years

AGRICULTURE would quickly become the mainstay of the newly populated Southwest, although it would take some years to convince farmers and business people that it could be a viable industry.

While farmers farmed, folks in the new hamlet site began building as shown on the next page. Through this book we'll demonstrate Swift Current's growth.





A June Day in 1914

The year is 1914, the month June, and we are standing on the south side hill looking down on Swift Current, officially incorporated as a city that January 15th.

The weather is hot, the wind always evident, but there hasn't been much rain, none in the last 10 days. However, farmers in the district say the crops are still looking good.

From our vantage point we can see

the ever-growing width and depth of the growing centre and fathom an idea of what makes it tick.

What we might notice first is the obvious, the structures which form the community and notice, too, the room available for future growth. We can only see a scattering of houses here on the south side, leading toward the railway tracks where the pulse of the new city beats. The peak of the homesteaders

rush is over but the railway station, the rail cars, the unloading platforms, are still a beehive of activity. Trains are coming and going, each still bringing enormous tonnage of settler goods and supplies, and more goods for the stores of the business section.

The trains are often using all the extensive length of track in the yard, long lines of box cars, five rows deep, and the 21-stall roundhouse. The track area is complex and won't change much in the next 75 years. The whistle from the CPR's boiler house is as good as a clock for city folk, letting out its high-pitched tone three times daily, in the morning, noon and at five o'clock.

Swift Current's blossoming business section, separated from the tracks by one street, Railway East and West, is branching out, adequately serving the population of city folk estimated at about 5,500 and the hundreds of homesteaders flocking to the district to live and work on their 160 acres. (A census that coming November would list 5,765 people comprising the new city.)

From its hub, Central Avenue, formerly 11th Avenue, the business section forms its pattern, working north up Central towards Herbert, going east and west from Central for a few blocks. Two years earlier the city engineer had recommended renaming streets and setting up a revised numbering system of streets. The plan suggested east and west streets were to be named, north and south streets numbered from Central. Central and the tracks were to provide the dividing lines for north and west, north and east, south and east and south and west. The street layout of the time would be changed little in the years ahead, just expand.

As we look over Swift Current's



C.P.R.R. Station, Swift Current, Sask.

THE PULSE OF THE NEW CITY

downtown, we see eight chartered banks, five grand hotels, four theatres, five church buildings, seven lumber yards and many, many other businesses, big and small. Perhaps the busiest office of them all, although slowly winding down its dominance, was the Dominion Land Office which saw long lines each and every day.



DELIVERY wagons scurried to and fro.

As we look north on Central this day a picture of city life unfolds. The hustle and bustle of business and shopping is shared with the friendly exchange of sidewalk gab sessions, many of the sidewalks were still wooden, cement walks were beginning to show up in the main business area. The city was in its sixth year now of a public works program and people were generally pleased with this progress, as well as development of water and sewage facilities.

Many men, all wearing jackets and hats, are standing about talking, probably about when it would rain, or how the ball team was doing, or the possibility of a World War unfolding. Others scurried to and from business offices. Women, all wearing wide hats,

busily walked to shops, some with children in hand. For the most part the ladies wore high collared necklines with street length dresses, sometimes a semblance of a bustle, and with high buttoned shoes. The young boys of the time also wore such shoes and could often be seen dressed in knee pants with stockings and jackets.

The streets were dirt, non-muddy at this point and along the walk came a policeman, the city having its own force by then. Storefronts had business names blazed on the windows, some with larger signs, a few with hanging signs and store awnings were quite evident. The sides of some buildings provided extra advertising potential and some walls were dominated by huge store lettering, even listing some of the products. Still today a few of those early message boards remain.

Down the centre of the street came several wagons, drawn by horses, loaded with supplies, gear and goods. But, mixed in with them, and mostly parked along the side, were the noisy automobiles, still new enough to cause many runaways of those horses. People were beginning to get used to the new vehicles, but not all could afford them. The city's bi-weekly newspaper, The Sun, carried an advertisement that day, its headline blaring, "New 1914 Ford's have arrived."

On the adjoining streets much the same was taking place, but to a lesser degree the further out one looked. That 'further out' was growing by 1914, moving more to the east and west although there were still many vacant lots. Other chapters depict this growth, but slowly the edge of town was creeping out.

Although these streets provided the

'edge of town' atmosphere, that didn't mean solid development was in place. For example, the 11th East extremity basically was only one block deep.

Throughout the streets delivery wagons of all sorts were scurrying about and children, when school was out, were busy inventing new games to play.

Housing was taking shape at a fine pace, those big houses on the hill were under construction, some completed; other housing was sneaking east and west. Near the top of Central, said to be much steeper then, as were other streets to the east, housing was also developing on the west side, following the construction of the beautiful courthouse and the building of Central School.

If we looked over the top of the hill, the wilderness of the Prairies loomed, nothing under construction beyond the crest. From there the trails to homesteads, and the established routes, were laid.

What is very noticeable in this grand picture we see this day is the lack of trees, in all sections buildings far outnumbering them. City folk were busy in this 1914 setting, and before, planting trees that would years later give Swift Current its beautiful setting. Green isn't overly evident on lawns either, although this is happening fast. The only natural green comes from land and trees confined along the creek or in some isolated low spots.

This is an exciting, bustling community, in full gear for the future. People didn't know post war years would slow things down nor did they know the 'dirty thirties' would come their way.

In 1914, Swift Current was simply a busy place with charitable and friendly people eager to expand their ideas.

Fraser Timms Led the Way . . .

When Fraser Timms, a man quick to grasp an opportunity, opened his make-shift general merchandise store in 1882, he set in motion a wave that would make Swift Current the focal point of a strong Southwest Saskatchewan.

That wave wasn't quick to come. The main crest would await the new century and a confirmation that agriculture would succeed and that the railway would branch to the north and northwest.

But, in those exciting times of newness, Timms and the adventurous merchants who would follow, began building the excitement of a new place.

Timms didn't stay that first winter, nor did the railway men, but in the Spring he was back and so were new merchants in the name of the Curry brothers and McDonald, Charles Reid coming later. Early photos show locals of the time gathered around Timm's store front posing for the camera with great emptiness of the land surrounding them. Nearby, a few other wooden frame buildings, all serving the railway workers, ranchers and other souls of the tiny settlement.

The police kept the area free of serious trouble those first years, but by 1885 the name Swift Current suddenly received national attention and recognition. Joining the incoming settlers on the train were soldiers, dismantling here to head north, their mission to repel the Riel forces.

That short-lived rebellion brought much tension to Swift Current, but it did

not stop the influx of newcomers, those pioneers arriving daily, many taking up stakes here, many more heading off to further points in the northwest.

Swift Current's first homestead was filed on August 24, 1885 by William G. Knight, soon followed by Alred Fenton (Fenton's Grove fame) and Charles Powell, a little later by John Oman (Swift Current's oldest school, Oman, would be built in the new century on his land).

Also during this period the first church emissaries arrived, priests, ministers and missionaries, a few staying to begin the process of what would eventually lead Swift Current to be called 'City of Churches.'

Near the end of that decade, in June 1888, the first survey of a town site was filed laying out some core streets, Railway and Cheadle being the main east and west. Chaplin would soon follow; 11th Ave. would later become Central. That townsite location hadn't been the CPR's original intention, rather they had looked to the east side of the Creek. John Watson and Robert Julian, their hands on that land, caused the shift by setting their selling price too high for the dollar-conscience rail people. Instead, the CPR shifted priorities and bought from William McTaggart to the west of the Creek.

Regardless of which side, Swift Current's good water supply and its mid-way point between Moose Jaw and Medicine Hat, was the reason it became a sub-divisional point.

By the 1890s the settlement was

beginning to see some shape, yet still very small. The settlers and business minded were still coming and spreading out through the district, a census of 1885 showing 828 people in the area, of which very few were women. It would take until the turn of the century for the population of Swift Current alone to surpass the 100 mark.

The shape of the community wasn't much, the assorted stores, buildings and make-shift living quarters, huddled around the Railway-Central hub. It was the rail men, the ranchers, settlers, some trappers that the businessmen served. Only planks covered the streets when muddy and a glimpse of sidewalks, more wooden planks, were taking better shape. The sale of goods was surpassing the previously thriving business of shipping buffalo bones out for buyers who used them for fertilizer and in refining sugar. The last of the buffalo had been seen in 1887-88.

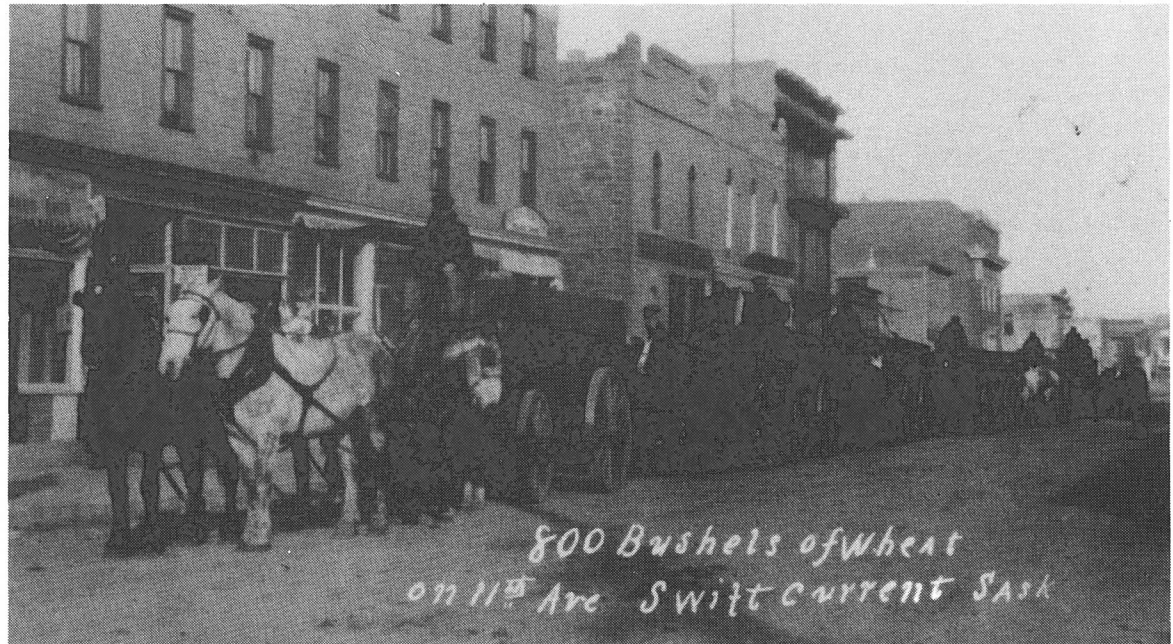
Since Central, then 11th Ave., wasn't the flat stretch we know today. A ridge ran east and west adjacent to Railway so the build up of stores, up to this point in time, the 1890s, took place on that ridge and north of it.

From that stage in Swift Current's history, the story of real growth begins to unfold right up to, and including, 1914 and then beyond to today's modern city. This story best unfolds in stages, some of these stages described next, the others dispersed throughout this history book.



NEW ARRIVALS

SETTLERS WOULD come by the thousands through Swift Current's rail yards. This photo captures the scene in 1908.



TRAIN OF GRAIN

LONG LINES of grain wagons coming into town drew much attention. This photo was taken in 1914.

The new century's first decade

Early in the new century, lower Central Avenue and Railway, perhaps five or six blocks to the east and about two to the west, were the hub of the wheel.

From beginning to end, the first decade was one of construction, somewhat at an easy pace at first, then shooting into a boom by 1909 and beyond into the early teens. In 1903, for example, the Imperial Hotel, half the size it is today, was going up on the corner of Central and Railway with the Charles Reid block next to it on the north. That major building (which until recently housed the Styerite store) located the Union Bank, Swift Current's first.

Across the street Argue and Cooper were moving in to a new building on Central from their original site east of Fraser Timm's store on Railway. That Railway location would be approximately where the present RCMP building is located.

Other outlets were going up, or had been built, such as the Swift Current Land Company offices and Sun Printing which first located on Central, then moved to Railway in its own building.

The Reliance Hotel began building west of the Imperial, at 1st West, and from that building the Dominion Land Office located, undoubtedly one of the busiest spots in the community then, destined to be even busier in about five years.

As the decade moved on the first three blocks of Central began to fill in, rapidly. From the Imperial, north on Central, west side, places like Jack Wood's Men's Wear would form with

Westlake Photo studio and a dental office upstairs; the Royal Bank emerged in the first block as did the Bank of Montreal, Rooney's Drug Store and A.J. Wigmore's yard good store, probably the first such exclusive outlet.

Still on the west side, but north from Cheadle, Anderson Implements opened as did the Wetmore Hardware store (which would burn down in the middle teens), a grocery store and Jim Sykes blacksmith shop, located where CKSW is



AT THE turn of the century we can see how many women and children dressed.

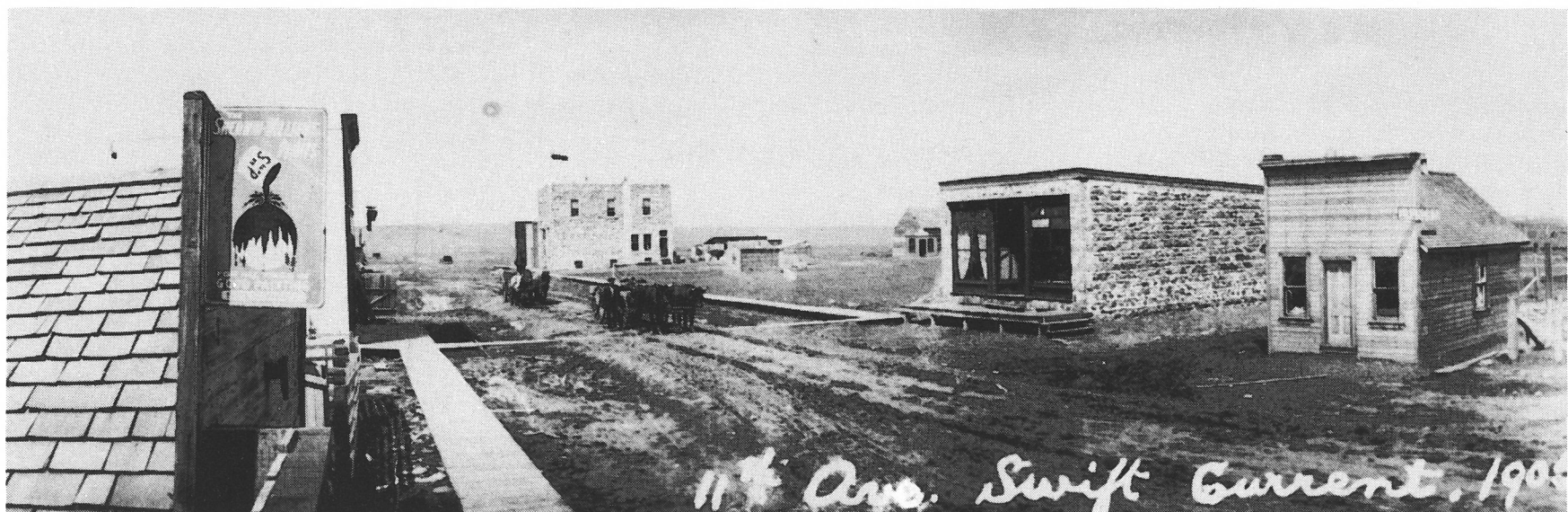
now situated. Sykes switched businesses several times in his long career, changing his blacksmith shop to an implement dealership in 1909, a garage about a year later and changed to musical instruments in the 1920s. A 51-year history in business in Swift Current would draw to a close in 1954.

Other locations on the west side, between Cheadle and Chaplin, were Bill Marlow's lumber yard and a second hand store owned by Bill Hemingway. Even north of Chaplin began to fill in, on the west side still, the Unique Theatre, Salvation Army and Carter-Jones electric.

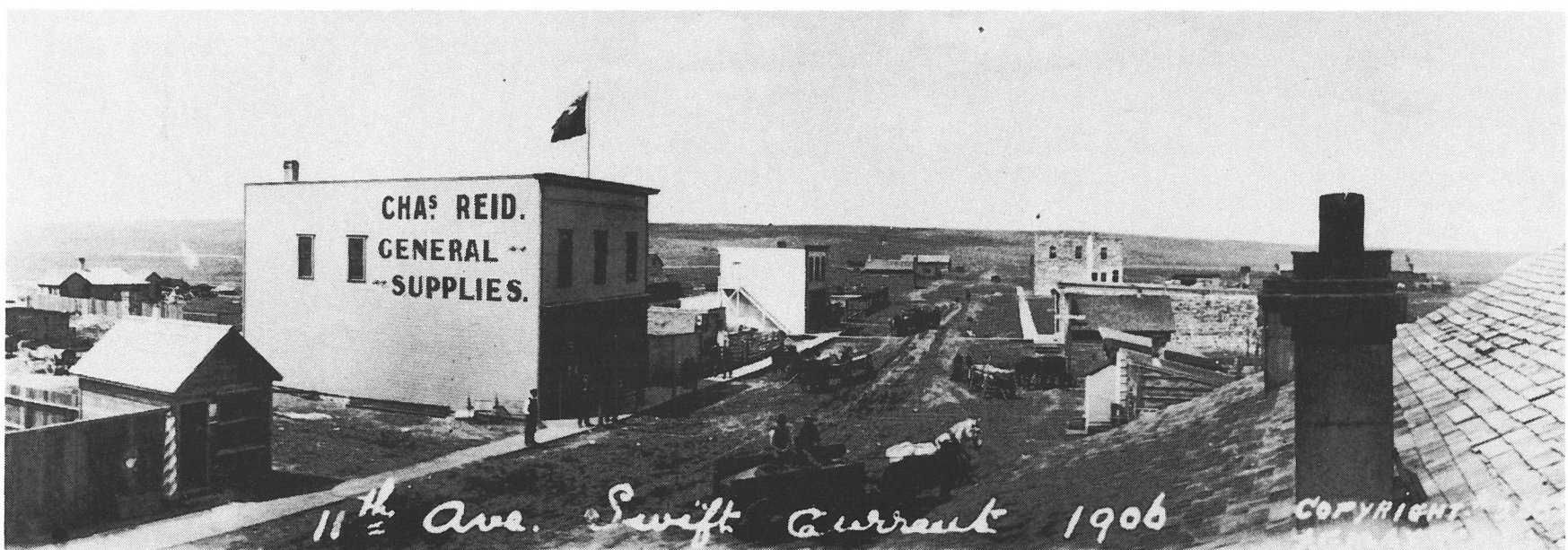
North from Railway on Central, looking on the east side, many buildings were also in place. A post office opened on the corner, followed by Argue and Cooper's expansion; there was the Eagle Theatre, the George Bilborough Block with Ed McKenzie and Beecher Mann's men's clothes store and the Bank of Ottawa included; the Picadilly Cafe and the Alexandra Hotel, its building completed by H.C. Powley in 1907. The Venice and Elite Cafe were some of the others on the block.

Argue and Cooper were the centre of attraction for Central in those days, that store providing it all, what with groceries, hardware, furniture, clothing and even barbed wire. The Beecher and Mann outlet was the first exclusive men's wear shop of the community. Beecher would pass away in 1921 and the McKenzie name on the store front continued on until recent years.

Central's dirt street had been flattened out by this stage, its beehive of activity of people, wagons, shoppers



TWO VIEWS OF SWIFT CURRENT'S CORE 1905 AND 1906



. . . *New Century*

and the delivery wagons, making the scene quite spirited. On Saturday, cowboys from the ranches would put up their ponies at the livery stables and head into the Imperial Hotel on the corner for some liquor. Having a drink in the bar wasn't that easy in those days as it was standing only, no tables or chairs as we have now. Drinkers would lean against the long bar, with its giant wall mural of an Indian setting, undoubtedly making getting drunk tougher, although later chapters show the town police would usually have quite a few visitors each night in their lodgings.

Continuing up the east side, north from Cheadle another historical site was in place. At the corner, a drugstore built originally for Dr. Field, Swift Current's first doctor, went up in about '04 and would become a permanent fixture in the community, always as a drug store, with offices upstairs. Successive owners would include T.W. Hutcheson, A.E. Longmore, Bradbrooke's, now the McMillans.

Johnny Goodman had a photo studio in a small building back of the drugstore in those days, and just east of there, on Cheadle, the Healy Hotel was being built by the Bookers, to become a major landmark. (Now, unfortunately, being prepared for the demolition ball).

A shoe repair opened next to the drug store and Joe Fownes and Cy Grant opened their jewellery store on the block, the Fownes name continuing on Central since.

North from Cheadle, still on the east side, Clements paint shop was in place, with Jim Clements and Jake Kruse

adding a sign and housepainting shop as well. Jake Kruse began a family tradition at that time; the Kruse family has been in business on Central Avenue now for over 80 years.

The Lyric Theatre was a little further up the street.

Other businesses had been setting up along Railway. At 27 Railway East, on the corner of Central, there is quite a history of stores established through the years including the Co-op many years after this time period.

Looking east along Railway from 1st N.E. in 1909 one saw a busy stretch with Sanders meat market, at the No. 27 location, the dining hall, Fred Cooper's bakery and the Reliance over in the next block west of the Imperial.

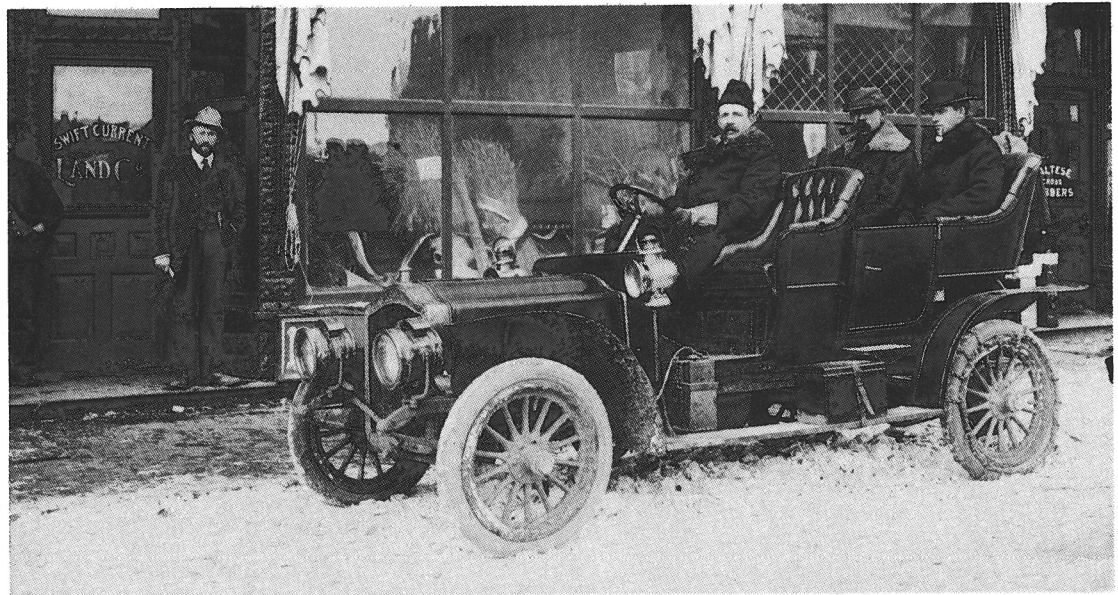
Stores were quite different then to what we know today. Back in 1914, for example, there were no self-serve stores, the goods in most outlets behind the

counter. W.W. Cooper introduced an exciting way of dealing merchandise, running a belt system from the merchandise to the cashier. The Woolworth's store, when it came later, brought about the first degree of self-serve.

And, stores weren't the only businesses with a difference; banks in those days had their tellers in cages all day long, the cages locked while the employee was inside or out.

This glimpse of the inner core of Swift Current's business section clearly shows a community on the move. There were more buildings to come, many more, and more commercial outlets to go up in the years ahead, some of which is described in successive sections.

But, what of Swift Current's status in government and its confirmed place as a prairie strong point?



FRED EDMANSON, driving, with Chris Doonan and George McDonald in one of

the early cars in Swift Current.



EAST SIDE OF LOWER CENTRAL IN 1907

THE ALEXANDER hotel at left was completed in 1907; next was the Diana

Cafe (now the Modern), followed by the Bilborough Block, an unknown building

and the Argue and Cooper store. Streets were dirt and sidewalks wooden.

From Village to City

Village status had been given Swift Current in 1903, a process which had actually begun back in 1895.

That year, a village ordinance was passed by the Territorial Government followed by a local improvement ordinance in '98, creating districts and in turn, the districts formed townships. Swift Current tried for the earmark of a village of its own in 1899, but was too small. When that eventuality came, Overseer Fred Jones was there to keep a vigil.

The district that year, 1903, also enjoyed the influx of many new farmers, including the Manitoba Mennonites, who had fled persecution in Russia in 1874. They were now seeking out new land and bought near Herbert and Rush Lake and six townships southeast of Swift



STYLISH CLOTHES and colorful hats were the dress of the day.

Current. By 1907, some 2,000 Mennonites had completed settlement here to become excellent farmers, business and professional people, contributing greatly to the city over the years.

On March 15, 1907 the community climbed another notch on the municipal ladder, claiming town status and would soon truly enter the 'boom' years of its existence.

Wilfred Jones became the first town mayor that April with councillors William Milburn, Dr. W.H. Field, William Marlow, T.W. Hutcheson, Edward Brown and Ira Argue. These elected officials, together with a progressive and aggressive Board of Trade, and eager merchants, set in motion an anxiety to succeed, and expand, that would set a pace of expansion on the 'flying high' level.

The boom hit about 1909 after Swift Current and district, like the rest of the country, unravelled from the recession of 1907-08. When it hit, it came fast and furious, real estate people scurrying everywhere, businesses expanding, more coming on stream and many of the local improvements (talked about in other sections of this book), either instituted, placed on the drawing board, or at least conceived.

A second 'boom' hit in 1911, the year the CPR began building the Empress and Vanguard rail lines which cemented Swift Current's future as the place to be. It was in that time frame, too, that a second, equally important determination was made, that grain farming indeed could be a successful

venture, something worth taking on, although always a risk.

These turning points were crucial. Some say had these extra rail lines not been developed, or had not some good crops occurred, Swift Current might easily have faltered. Now, with hope in the fields and a pending connection to the north and northwest, a vital link, it was full speed ahead.

By 1910-11, in such a short span since becoming a town, Swift Current's business community was looking pretty strong and growing. Let's take an overview.

Two new general merchants had added their names to the core list, those being Famous Mercantile and Great Northern Supply. Three lumber yards were doing a bustling business as wood



A 1915 kindergarten class posed for a photo at their location near Herbert Street.

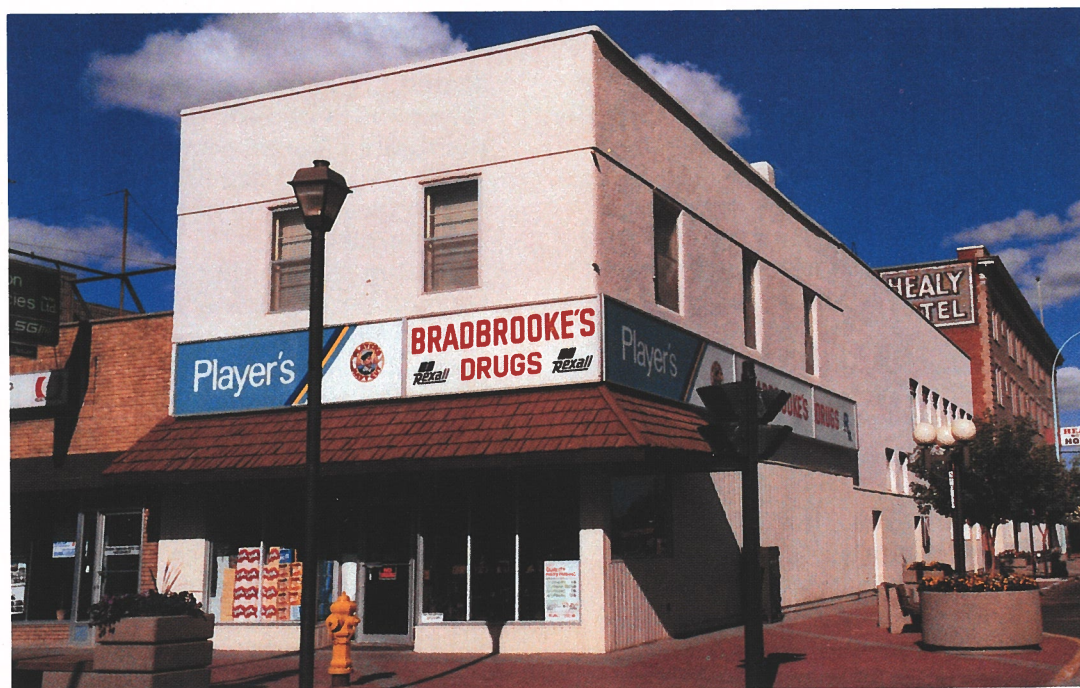


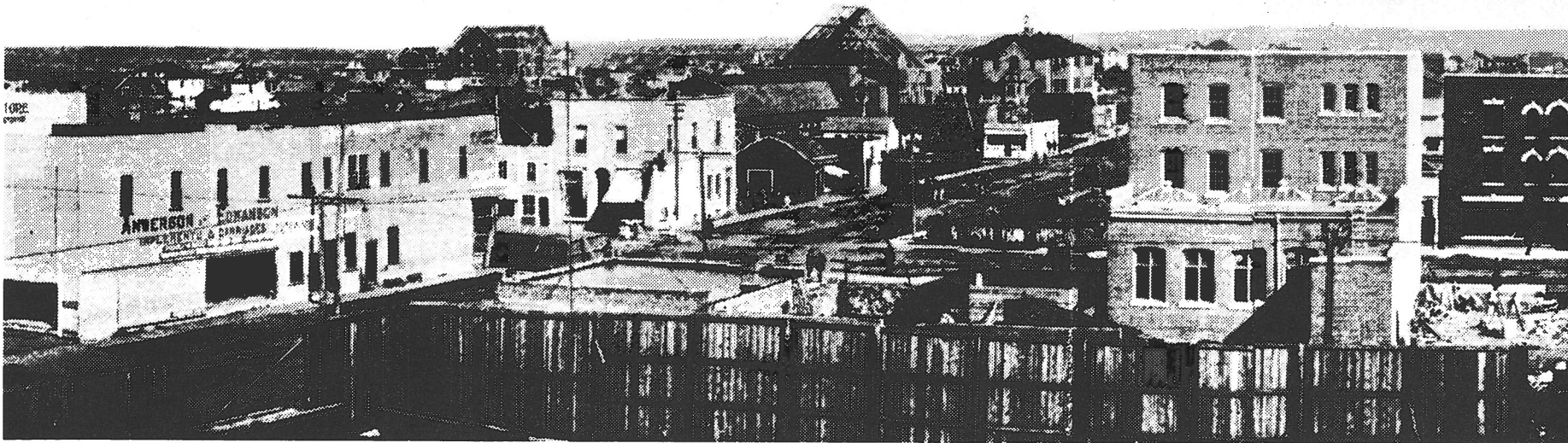
THEN:

THE NORTHEAST corner of Cheadle and Central has always housed a drugstore, the first about 1904, built by Dr. W.H. Field. The south wall was often used for advertising. Note, too, the angle parking on Cheadle, a short-lived practice.

NOW:

BRADBROOKE'S Drugs is now owned by Gord and Diana McMillan. Former owners include Dr. W.H. Field, Swift Current's first doctor, T.W. Hutcheson, A.E. Longmore and Bradbrooke. Offices are still upstairs, but the parking has changed as has the sidewalk style and light standards thanks to a downtown redevelopment program in the 1980s.





A PORTION OF THE BUSINESS SECTION

... Village to City

was needed desperately for all the busy construction, even though town council had decreed downtown core buildings should be made of brick or cement. At times, lumber price wars even upped the pace, prices falling below wholesale.

Two implement dealers were in town, three real estate firms, three livery stables, three restaurants, two butcher shops, a jewellery store, music shop, and some Chinese laundries. There were three hotels, the Alexandra (now the York) owned by H.C. Powley, the Imperial by Chas Turner and the Reliance by Berton and Webster. The Healy and Empress being built, the latter at 1st W. and Cheadle.

Hauling was a profitable business as were the horse-drawn wagons which scurried about town delivering coal, meat, groceries or bakery goods. Bill Brunyee started the town's first taxi, a brougham hack, an elegant affair,

pulled by horse.

All this, and more, was spreading out from the confines of Central and Railway, taking the business wing east and west from the main street.

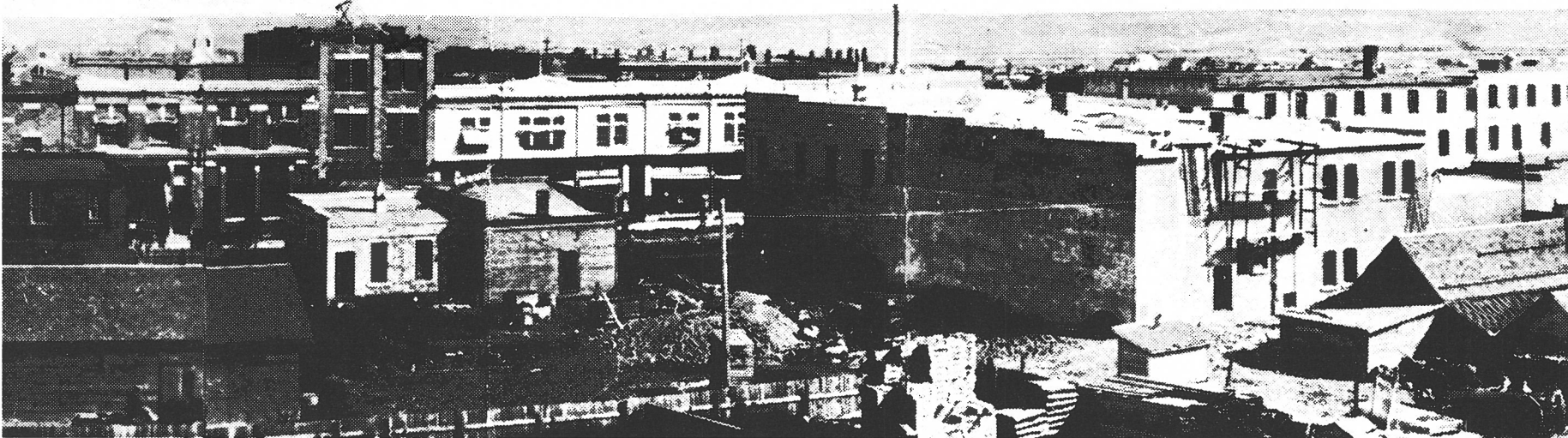
The town was busy. The population soared. From some 550 souls within the confines of Swift Current in 1907, the figure climbed several thousand by 1910, 4300 by 1912 and would climb to the suggested level of over 5700 by city incorporation.

Serving the farming community had become the objective, stores were staying open Saturday evenings and the suggestion of an extra night during the week was made, to accommodate the district folk who drove, by horse and wagon, and the odd car, to town for their supplies. Horse and wagon grain hauling teams were still seen coming down the main drag, six and seven wagons deep, and still they could be seen going up and over the hill and out onto the prairie to return home. There were still wooden sidewalks and the dirt

street was still dirt, although officials had toyed with some gravel, or cinders from the rail yards, to make it better.



SMILES AND laughter were a part of life, even during the daily chores.



DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED IN 1912

The arrival of settlers, which had begun with a trickle, grew to a stream, increased to a flow and now came like a pouring falls, the town welcoming them, selling them goods, seeing them off, some to the surrounding district. As the influx came, 1909 through 1913 being its peak periods, the town wanted more and more to offer. Its services plans went into full tilt, its recreation agenda moved forward and more buildings came on stream like the Carelton Hotel. They wanted industrial expansion and factories began to come, such as a brass and iron bedstead factory, a mattress factory, a flour mill and planing mill.

Even a family recreation area during those years was important, the town obtaining Fenton's Grove, due east of the present city dam. This was a delightful, spacious, level area with Manitoba Maples scattered here and there together with some willows and black birch along the creek, a perfect spot for family picnics and recreation.

Progress took that away as this dream spot, in 1913, was to be no more, the city dam was built, causing the water level to rise and putting the grove under.

As council moved to improve the community, and others, like the Board of Trade, diligently busied themselves promoting new enterprise, Swift Current fell into a financial trap that would take decades to totally resolve. The exactness of this situation we leave for others to detail, as is done in the history books, *Green and Growing Years*, and the *Grassland Settlers* by Don McGowan, but we will offer a glimmer of the dilemma.

What did happen is explained easiest by looking at Swift Current's assessment and tax situation in the years of 1907 to 1913. In the former, the assessment was \$500,000 and in the latter, a figure of \$11,500,000, an increase which can only be described as unbelievable. By the time Swift Current would become a city, it had a debenture

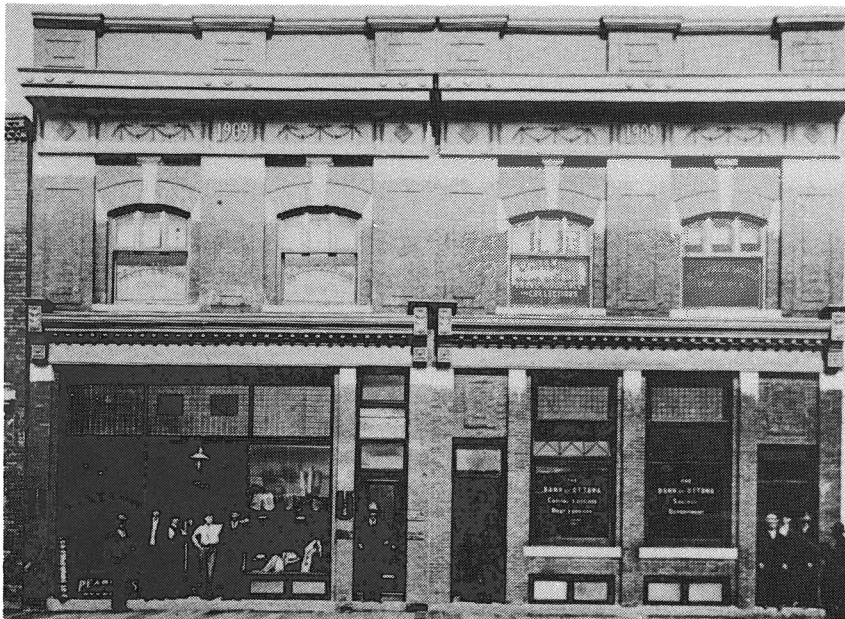
debt of \$850,000.

The reasoning may be complex, but in its simplest form, what residents wanted was boom times and that's exactly what it got.

Debt aside, this was an exciting place with genuine people and organizations trying to make it even more exciting. The core was expanding, businesses doing well, a significant number of civic projects on the go, automobiles entering the scene, even roads were looking better, inside and out the town limits. In 1912, Swift Current's M.L.A., who also happened to be the Premier of the Province, Walter Scott, had instituted a provincial road building program.

In 1913 the 'boom' was riding the crest and these enterprising, energetic, enthusiastic, diligent and determined folk had one more job to accomplish --to achieve cityhood, that goal accomplished and set in motion January 15, 1914.

Swift Current's last town council, of



1909:

THE BILBOROUGH block was built in 1909, located on Central's East side between Cheadle and Railway. Ed McKenzie and Beecher Mann's Men's Wear, the Bank of Ottawa took most of the street

level while a number of offices were upstairs, including a collection agency, lawyer and dentist. Note that wooden sidewalks are still the order of the day.

1988:

THE TWO buildings at right are the present look of the old Bilborough Block, the Modern Restaurant at left. Occupants of the right have change since the photo was taken, now being Taki's Place. Some of the original outside can still be seen.





NOW & THEN:

THE BANK of Montreal is in the same location as when first opening here. Art Wigmore's Dry Goods were the original occupants of the south half of Hall's present store while Pete Rooney's Drugstore was in the North half. The Professional Building (on Healy-Booker Block) is in the same location.

NOW & THEN:

THE IMPERIAL Hotel was built in 1903, about half the size, at Central and Railway. Today, it shows its more modern look as it has expanded and been renovated. The Imperial was one of five hotels here at incorporation in 1914.



... Village to City

1913, comprised of Mayor Frank E. West, often called "Mr. Swift Current" for his enthusiastic support of community and sport; with councillors (and their responsibilities) being: H.C. Powley (finance), Dr. G.L. Cameron (fire and light), J.A. Yager (water and parks), William Brown (public works), J.H. Forsey (town hall and receptions) and J.O. Grinder (health and relief).

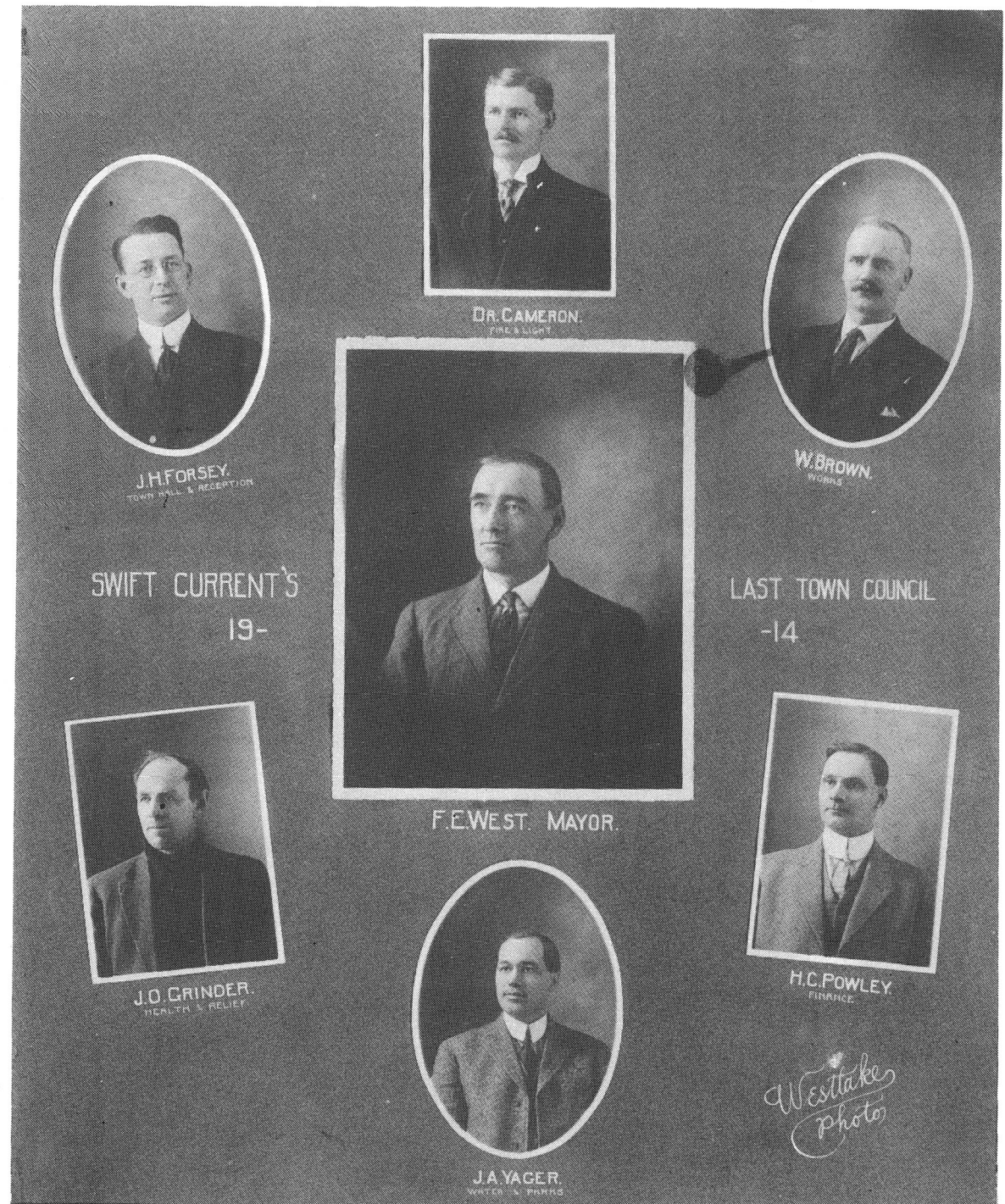
Council carries on

With the push for city status complete, the elected Town Council carried on as the first City Council, with slight changes. Councillor William W. Cooper joined the city council as J.A. Yager left.

These were distinguished men, mostly businessmen, who like their predecessors, strived to push the city further forward. To some extent, however, the 'boom' was over as the new city met face to face with its growing debt and on the horizon loomed a conflict of great magnitude, the Great World War and beyond that the tough times of the 'thirties.'

Into the future

Yet, into the future marched Swift Current, its population growing, its business community strengthening, its people ever-conscious of taking the future on with enthusiasm. From the series of stories throughout this book, we can re-live those experiences.





NOW & THEN:

NORTH FROM Chaplin, West side of Central, early in the century had the Carter-Jones Electric, The Salvation Army and Unique Theatre for example. W.W. Smith, a long-time business, was for years located just north of Cheadle, on the East side.

NOW & THEN:

THUMPERS, on Central, is the renovated Lyric Theatre, built before incorporation and serving movie-goers straight through to the late seventies. In 1914, the city had 4 theatres, the first talkie shown, "The Jazz Singer" starring Al Jolson in August 1929.



How the Southwest was won

Three elements, happening in a time span of less than a decade, gave birth to Swift Current.

The North West Mounted Police, stopping here in 1874, opened the region; the Canadian Pacific Railway creating a sub-divisional point here in 1882, provided the root for growth; and the opening of the Battleford Trail, a year later, generated trade. These were the key essentials that allowed a settlement to burst forward in the midst of the great expanse of prairie land,

then a part of the North West Territories; our area in the district of Assiniboia.

A fourth element sparked the other three and a fifth would make it all work.

Thousands of miles to the east, the Government of Canada wanted the western regions of its territory opened, and properly earmarked as Canadian turf, and it set in motion the wave of happenings that sent the police to tame whiskey traders and other assorted types, and went to its coffers, time and time again, to see a railway track cross

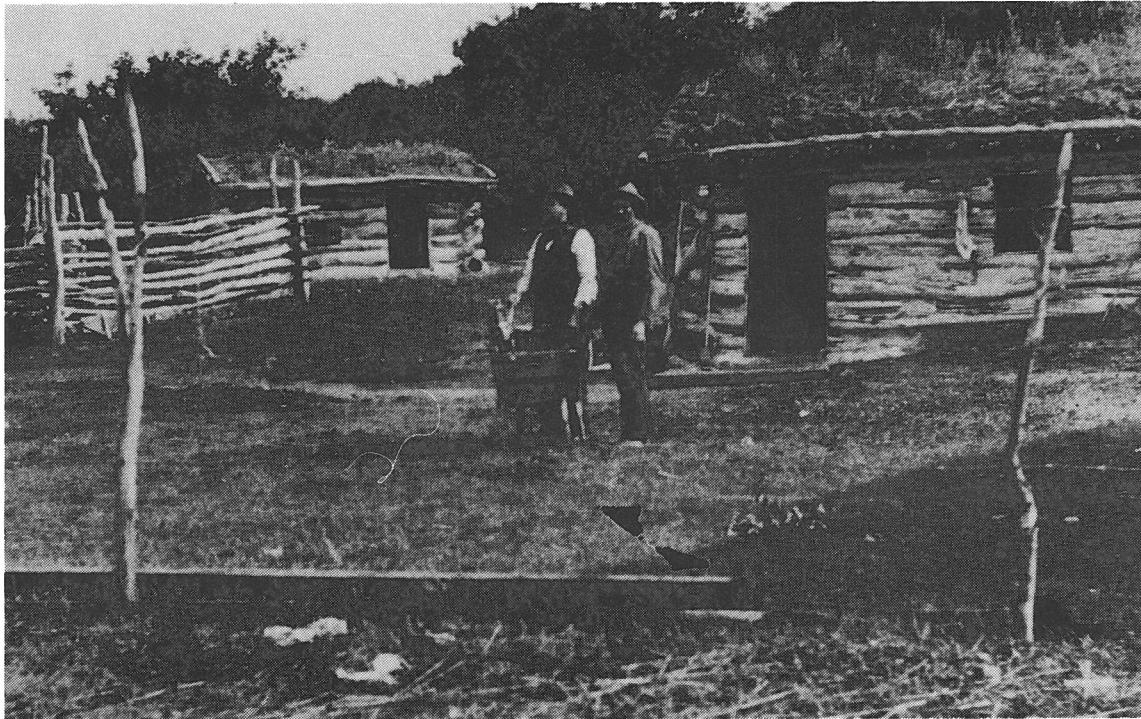
the land and bring the country together.

The important element, the fifth, were the sturdy, adventurous men, filled with initiative and determination, who followed the tracks and had the fortitude to make something out of nothing beside the Swift Current Creek, which fur traders had called by the French name 'Riviere du Courant'.

Without any of these elements Swift Current might very well have not existed, or better put, might not have lasted.

Before these events occurred, this land along the southern section of the west belonged to the Indians, was filled with buffalo and had as its only other inhabitants, fur traders, prospectors and whiskey dealers, the latter often breaching the area from the United States. And, this particular area went often unexplored by those who counted as it was thought to be a generally useless area.

So, what of our three main elements --the police, the railway, the trading trail? In the remainder of this section, a sketch of that story unfolds, from beginning to present day.



AN EARLY FARM SCENE

Police tame the land

It was the North West Mounted Police who prepared this region for white settlement and who kept the district free of serious strife.

When the police arrived, and camped by the banks of the Swift Current Creek on August 24, 1874, eight years before the railway came, they began a process of undertaking this corner of the Prairie and opened the door to what would come. They saw a wild country, much

Reaching an untamed land

of it unexplored, open in all directions, no fences, no ploughed furrows, no houses, hamlets or villages and no roads. There was nothing but the expanse of prairie hills, beaten down in places by the thundering hooves of buffalo and that immense Prairie sky overlooking it all.

Much of the credit for our quiet growth, and lack of violent encounters, was due to the Mounted Police. Earning a \$1 per day, these rugged men who set many a trail in the Southwest, combined skill, unity, perservance and luck to lay the groundwork for peaceful settlement.

Tough moments with Indians bands were recorded as were long, lonely hours of riding, fighting prairie fires and always battling the harsh climate.

Their role expanded as progress, in the name of the great railway, and

violence, in the form of a rebellion, approached, happened and became history.

The Police would protect the advancing railway and the incoming settlers, be a buffer between settlement and Indians, stop the liquor traffic among Indians, protect the growing hamlet, its people and businesses, be called to arms in the Rebellion and buffer again during the aftershocks of that insurrection. They were on hand as the freight lines from Swift Current were established, they investigated thefts, arrested drunks, collected custom duties, enforced the Game Act. They conducted train searches for illegal drugs, liquor and freight train passengers and patrolled for American rustlers who would sneak up across the border to raid ranches.

These history-making Mounties would play an extra role in the development of Swift Current and district. Many would come to love the area and with their

Many Mounties took to farming

reward of a section of land at the end of a term of service, a good number settled here. In fact, the majority of the early ranchers in the Southwest were former Mounties.

Some, instead, would become businessmen. One genial type, William

Saunders, became a well known businessman, and, with his new wife, Eliza Clarke, became the first couple to be married in Swift Current, in 1886. He would later run a dairy business, a butcher shop, then a slaughter house.

Indian Tension

Indians were not a real problem at the time the Mounted Police arrived in the Swift Current area. Treaty No. 4, signed in 1873-74, was in place with the Cree

Numerous scares, few problems

and Assiniboine. No serious trouble was at hand from the Plain's Cree, Chippewas and Blackfoot. But, during the next dozen years as the whites and progress arrived, the imposing circumstances brought many occasions of shattered nerves through Indian scares. The Mounted Police were there; the buffer zone.

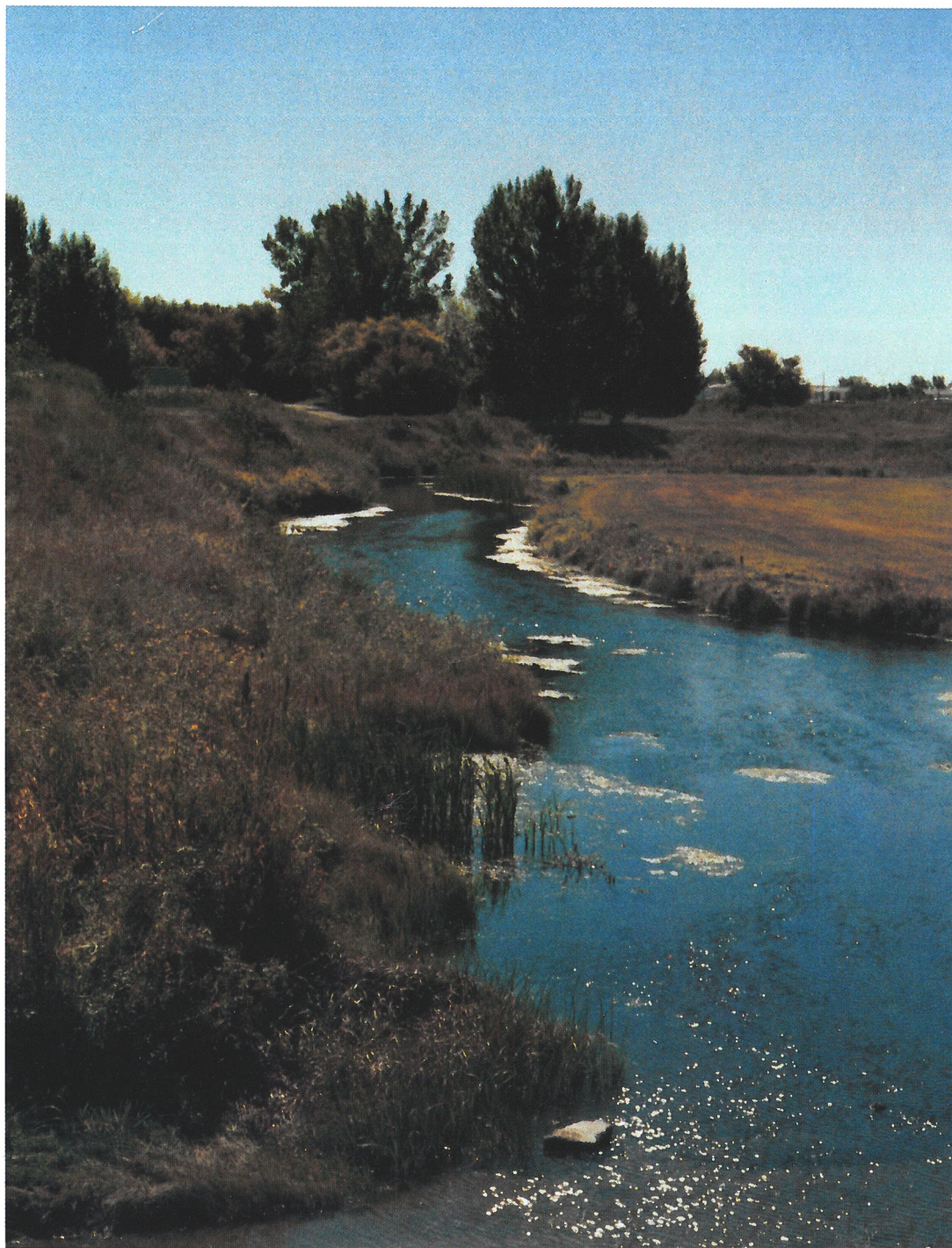
The construction of Fort Walsh at Cypress in 1875 by troops under James Morrow Walsh, focused the police nearness in the region, including Swift Current. The fort was credited with instilling an "atmosphere of comparative quiet" to the region that "had probably held more dangerous possibilities than any part of the Canadian North West."

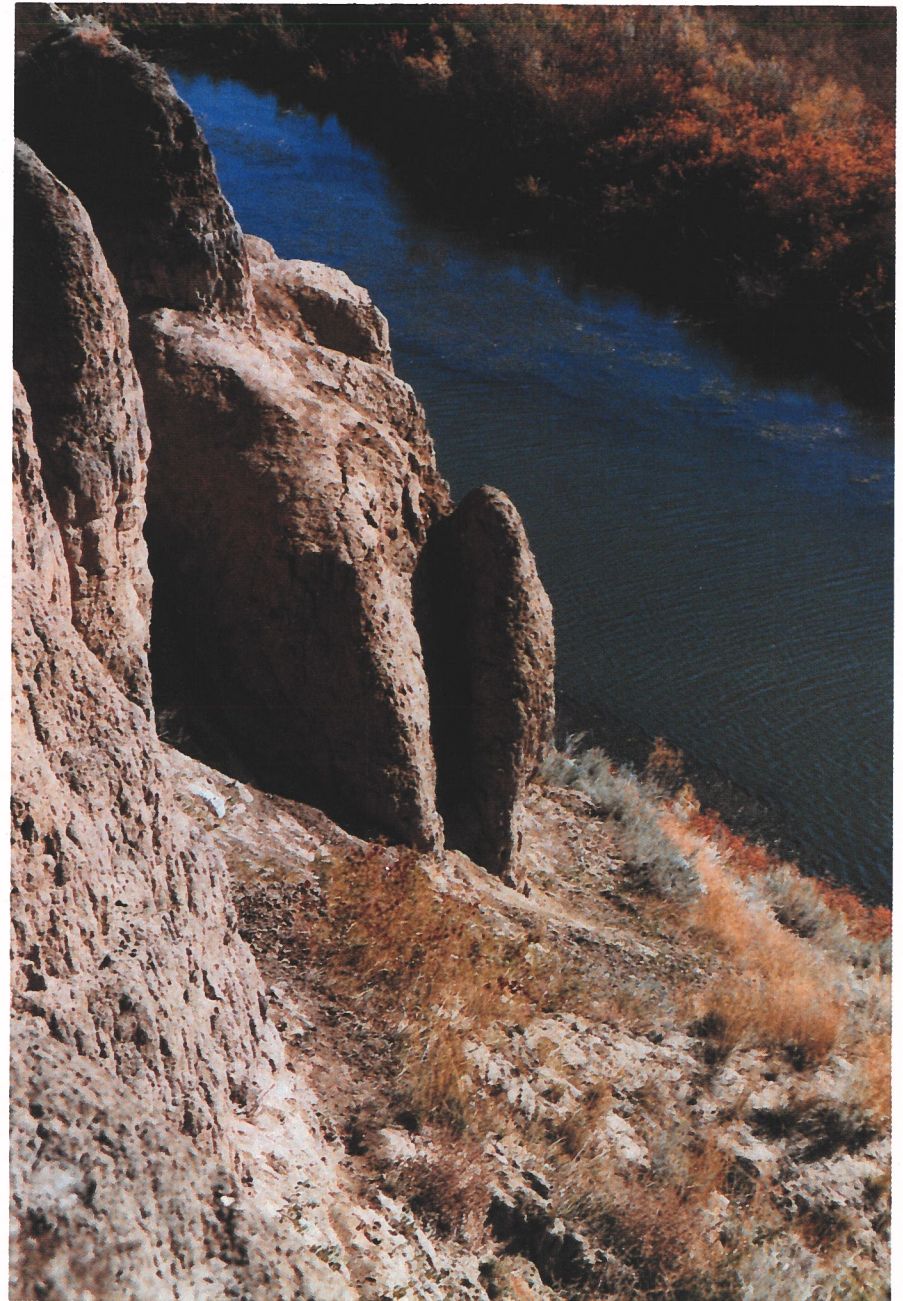
Police tamed the land . . .



Reaching the untamed land

THE NORTH West Mounted Police would have found land and water somewhat similar to these. There was nothing but the expanse of prairie hills and the great prairie sky. The creek, where they stopped, was a welcome sight, and the cutbanks, next page, provided contrast.





BEAUTIFUL CUTBANKS AT THE CITY'S SOUTHERN EDGE

For example, the territory was soothed at the success of negotiations at Fort Walsh in 1877 with Chief Sitting Bull which sent the American Sioux back across the border following the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

Individual examples of tension and police solution were recorded. In 1883, Chief Piapot and his band encamped west of Swift Current on the railway right-of-way and refused to move. Two policemen calmly moved in, gave Piapot 15 minutes to depart and when the time lapsed simply kicked out the poles of their teepees, effectively collapsing their homes. The Indians left without incident.

National attention focuses here

The Rebellion

In 1885 the woes of land grew worse as relations between Metis and some Indian bands with the government of the day faltered, then collapsed. At Batoche, on March 18-19, Louis Riel and his men seized hostages and declared a provisional government, setting in motion -- war. A few days later, at Duck Lake, Superintendent Crozier and his Mounties were in battle with the rebels, Crozier losing 10 men, the rebels five.

The Frog Lake massacre happened April 1, when warriors from Big Bear's band killed nine settlers in that area. On April 25, at Fish Creek, the rebels

met Major General Frederick Middleton and May 3 Lieutenant-Colonel W.D. Otter and Poundmaker's band met in battle at Cut Knife Creek, the troops having to retreat to Battleford.

Swift Current, and the Police, would play a significant part in that rebellion and settlers here would feel the tensions of battle and play an intricate part in the system of defeat to Louis Riel. It really took a rebellion to make the area known.

Police numbers had been increased as these pressures approached. By 1885 the strength of the force was increased to 1,000 from 500 in 'A' Division, based in Maple Creek, plus detachments at Swift Current and Medicine Hat increasing to 102 officers and men from 48.

While Swift Current was well to the south of battle, the growing hamlet was in fact a nerve centre of the struggle. It was here the government forces chose as a main supply depot during the Rebellion for Middleton and the Canadian Militia Forces. Swift Current was also the 'jumping off point' for Colonel Otter's troops and a corp of 50

Armed band nears Hamlet

Mounties and Superintendent W.H. Herchimer.

As the battles north prevailed, the bustle of Swift Current as a depot was highlighted, but as such drew its own

scares of Indian battles.

On April 3, 1885 Swift Current was in flight as a well armed band of over 30 Cree warriors approached the hamlet. The Indians had moved their camp about 18 miles on the Swift Current Creek and rode into town for supplies of food and ammunition and wanted news of the rebellion. No attempt was made to halt them with demands for food met by frightened merchants, some paid for and some given.

But, townfolk hid their ammunition and quickly sent their women and

Police recalled to give protection

children by train to Moose Jaw. Luck was on the side of the pioneers as the Indians roamed the hamlet, got their goods, spent the night and rode out peacefully the next morning.

The citizens had braved it through showing remarkable inner strength, the Indians sensing the calm and doing no damage. Yet, the vulnerability had left its mark, as had the fright. With a rebellion in high gear and troops away fighting those battles, Swift Current had been on its own and exposed. The decision was made to return Herchimer's police force to the hamlet to secure the area, followed by other decisions to safeguard the area including ensuring that powerful area tribes would remain loyal.

Another story of 1885 brought

Police . . . 1910 to present

citizens more tense moments as Cree and Chippewyan Indians plotted an attack. Saving the day, a detachment of troops detailed for Batoche arrived, rounded up the plotters, escorting them to Fort Qu'Appelle.

Alarm created by Rebellion persisted two years afterwards. In 1886 two bands of treaty Indians refused to leave the district causing Superintendent McIlree and a large party NWMP to arrest several leaders.

There were other moments, too. In 1887, people were apprehensive at the number of half breeds at the Landing. Were they preparing to attack? They were not. In another incident, the legendary Superintendent Sam Steele and most of 'D' Division rushed to Gull Lake to confront a large party of well armed half breeds. Steele found only a group of forsaken natives.

INDIAN FLIGHT

The plight of some Indians left its mark on the history books. Relief rations were issued to some 'deserving' Indians and half-breeds and most non-treaty Indians were left to fend for themselves and once proud people had to eat horse, dog, etc., some froze, women sold themselves, men escaped in whiskey, while loyal natives were not treated much better than 'bad' Indians.

By 1889-92 there were only a few

Indian families left in the district. When the century turned, and Swift Current's true growth was imminent, policing of the community began to change. The Mounties had served well, but they had an entire region to protect and the growing village, then town, moved towards its own police force.

In 1910 a Town Constable named Bell was hired and a year later Swift Current's first Chief of Police, John Smeaton, took over what he described as a real "wild west town." Local police handled bylaws, ensured the bars closed properly, and of course, rounded up those who overly indulged, considered it a slow night if only 20 or so overnight guests were lodged from the spirits.

The police also established a confidence in the community, were well respected, smart looking, patrolled by foot and 'got things done', oldtimers recall, sometimes teaming up with the Mounties on certain cases. Dangerous criminals, and serious crimes, and there were both, were transported and dealt with in Regina.

In 1918 city fathers wanted to amalgamate the police and fire departments, but such a move was rescinded. The Provincial Police also were on call here in the twenties, but were disbanded in 1928.

Through the years the City Police were

led by such notable Police Chiefs as John Smeaton, Enach Barthwick, Taylor, Walker, Roy Hart and Sid Cunningham. And, ranks swelled over time. For example, in 1938 there was a chief, a sergeant and two constables. By 1955 the chief had a sergeant and 11 constables.

The department obtained its first patrol car in 1936, had radar in 1961 and brought in breathalyzer units in 1969. They also occupied many a different headquarters, moving about dwelling from places like the basement of the original Beatty Collegiate, the old Farmer's Equipment building, a building on 2nd N.E. and Cheadle to Chaplin E. and so on.

Their service came to an end in 1970 when disbanded by city fathers who brought back the Mounted Police on contract, signed December 24th that same year. Known as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police since 1919, the federal force set up a city detachment and rural subdivision, locating the latter on the hill, the former joining the fire hall at Chaplin and 2nd N.E., finding its present, modern location at Railway and 1st N.E., almost two decades later.

Just as they opened Southwest Saskatchewan to the coming railway over 100 years ago, the Mounties still 'ride' the trails of the area.



BUILT BY 1914:

TOWERING down on the city from its Dufferin Street location, the beautifully built Court House was completed during incorporation year, 1914. The building was actually finished the year before, but the four front columns were then added.

NEW STATION:

AS THE second police story tells, police officers changed several times through the years and from 1910 to 1970 local police handled the workload. The return of the RCMP came in late 1970 and this new detachment was built in the 80s.



Railway growth exciting

The coming of the C.P.R. provided the root for Swift Current's growth, in fact, its existence.

With it came everything -- goods to sell, materials to build; it would bring business people and adventurers, farmers and ranchers; ministers, workers and professionals.

The railway surveyed here in 1881, the first train arriving in December, 1882. The building of a depot, siding and loading platform created the nucleus for a tiny settlement where only two white

men, William Timms (brother of Fraser) and John Lindsay, were at hand through winter.

The Spring brought workmen who built a rail office, freight shed, section house bunk house and dining hall. A roundhouse and turntable would follow. Also that spring, the first freight train pulled in and by the next year two mixed trains ran each week, east and west. The little settlement began growing, businesses establishing, sod houses going up, ranches developing.

National attention fell on the small hamlet in 1885, with Swift Current's rail point becoming a focal point as troops and the Mounted Police rallied here to strike north and quell the Reil Rebellion.

By 1889, daily trains ran and the water supply to the roundhouse and watertank was assured by building a 400-foot long stone and plank dam across the creek to the southeast of the depot. This not only helped the railway, but greatly assisted the community.

An extensive siding area to handle the



coming of settlers, livestock cars, coal, freight and equipment cars, was developed. Near the high water tank at 6th N.E. a coal dock and sand house serviced the powerful locomotives. In 1907 the CPR built the combined telegraph station, dining hall and depot of the red brick we see today, replacing the wood structure built in '03. A new freight shed, yard office and three more sidings were announced in 1909.

Through this time thousands were riding the trains west from Winnipeg after the new century arrived, Swift Current getting its share for town and rural population, becoming a hub in the branch line system. Growth in the volume of goods arriving here dramatically increased through these years.

During 1911 - 12 branch lines extended to Empress, Alta., to the northwest and Vanguard to the southeast and a new express office was built, stalls added to the roundhouse and more sidings in the yard. In the same period, the CPR mainline to Moose Jaw was doubletracked, later the double track section, here and elsewhere, was torn up.

The community grew with the railway and vice versa. The station was the heartthrob and would remain so for many years, citizens using its services extensively. Of course, the automobile began to change that, but even then the railway's dominance remained for decades, from shipping freight to delivering young men east as wars approached.

Many stories of locals using the line to visit, conduct business and promote the growing community from early days to the fifties, even the sixties. Eventually, cars and improving highways cut into

passenger service and the influx of the trucking industry moved some goods away from the lines. By the late 70's the passenger service evidenced its steady decline.

The early roundhouse, and its subsequent addition, was a dominant fixture in the local yards, highlighted in many aerial photos of the city. In the 1980s, a point of history ended as the roundhouse was demolished.

Today, we still see the great



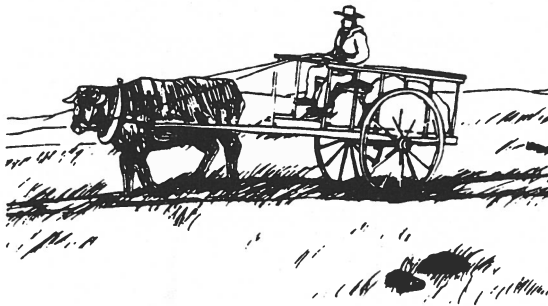
atmosphere of the railroad, remaining a dominant partner in Western Canada's economy. We see the passenger train pull in during early morning and late evening and the thousands upon thousands of freight, grain and resources cars that pass through Swift Current each year. The old, red brick station is now an historic site, although its offices no longer play a significant role in Swift Current's present, they provide a definite reminder of our past.

*CPR Dam - built in 1888
designated a heritage site
May 6, 1985*



Trail linked to trade routes

They created a 'hellish noise'; their parts were joined by wooden pegs or buffalo rawhide; they had two wheels five to six feet high; were pulled by ox, pony or horse; had a balanced platform; and went ungreased as sand would erode their wooden parts.



These were the famous Red River carts which travelled this land so steadily, the ruts of their wheels still found in Swift Current today, a century later. In early Swift Current it was common to see long lines of them coming in, or going out, with hundreds jammed at the rail station.

These carts, and other wagons, rode the famous Battleford Trail that, with the creation of Swift Current, linked the north and the rail line by 1883. The tonnage of goods and supplies handled by freighters and settlers along the established, and often widening route, was astounding as was the time saved in receiving goods from the east, or sending goods from the north to the

east. There were other trails, to the east and west, but The Battleford Trail became the most famous of them all.

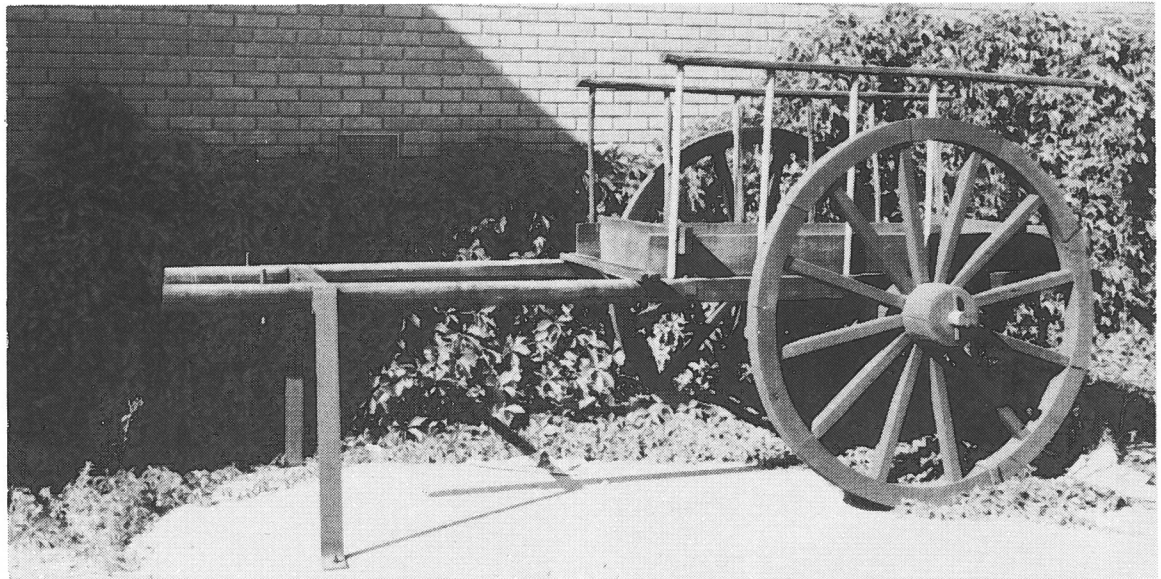
Metis first carried goods down the trail and then the white man caught on, eventually taking over, and expanding its progress. The ingenuity of the day developed scows to cross the South Saskatchewan River, the first a giant, nine feet by 18 feet, carrying two carts and drivers, cutting 40 days off delivery time to Battleford. Fraser Timms would later build a scow 16 by 40 foot to handle four wagons in one crossing.

Passenger stage service also began along the trail in 1883 and that winter a sleigh route was laid out, followed a year later with a wooden bridge over Eagle Hills Creek. By 1885 the Trail's

importance surged as military transportation of goods and men saved the country from the Riel Rebellion.

Progress, as always, ends tradition and freighting began to subside as more efficient modes branched out, including the rail lines, ferries and steamboats on the river and more bridges. But, it was the toughness and determination of the men in those early days who connected Swift Current to the north, and south, and developed the community into a centre of transportation. That determination also gave Swift Current a major resource, freighting, which held together the economics of the region until agriculture caught hold.

The Battleford Trail ranks high in Swift Current's development.



OUTSIDE THE museum today can be seen a replica of the famous Red River carts which dominated this land for a

few years. Ruts in the earth can still be seen today.

Through the years

The Pages Ahead . . .

The remaining pages of this souvenir history book look at many aspects of Swift Current's lifestyle, enterprises, facilities, sports, housing and other such elements.

Each story attempts to give an overall look at these subjects over the span of community history, from the early days to modern. None tries to depict all historical notes nor detail all things.



Progress in local transportation

Today, people think little of travelling hundreds of kilometres for a curling event, shopping spree, to follow the hockey team or for social contact. During at least the first half of Swift Current's history, travelling just wasn't that easy.

A casual drive to the Landing today, took days to complete 90 years ago. Getting around town was by horse and buggy, or wagon, by horse, or on foot. Family excursions outside the city, even by car in the 20s, were much more complicated, and much longer. Journeys to the big centres were by train. The three hour drive to Saskatoon now, is compared to a several day, even a week trip, say in 1920. It would take about a week with a team of oxen to venture in, and back, from the Matador Ranch. Multiply these journeys during the blizzards and cold of prairie life and transportation in early Swift Current wasn't to be a spontaneous, unplanned experience.

So, too, what was travelled on, wasn't conducive to easy going. Progress, from trails broken in the wilderness to dusty, dirty streets, to bumpy and hard-to-keep roads on the prairie, to the eventual paved roads and highway systems, took many years to accomplish.

Here is but a glimpse of how our modes of transportation developed in Swift Current and area.

The horse, of course, was the wonder vehicle of early days for just about everyone, as was horse and wagon. Farmers used wagon and horse, wagon

and oxen, to haul his grain to town, move his supplies; homesteaders and freighters branched out on Red River Carts; scows, then ferries travelled the river; and of course, the railway was the supply line.

Automobiles, expensive at first, and of no use during the winter, slowly began to appear here about 1907-08, becoming more common each year. By the time city status arrived, several hundred were about the community. Hoffman Powley's father bought one of the first cars here, a Carter, chain

driven, friction drive. Popular models were the Carter, Model T, Rambler and Cadillac. Their appearance drew much attention and caused many a runaway of the still popular horse. Ford brought the first pick-up truck style vehicle to town and by the twenties trucks joined cars scurrying about.

The city's first traffic lights were a long time coming, installed July 31, 1954.

As cars became common, the need for improved streets and connections developed, the road, bridge and highway



THE ENTIRE family rode downtown for shopping as shown in this 1907

photograph. While mom and dad shopped, the oldest child kept the reins.

... transportation

systems ever advancing in the decades ahead.

Since Chaplin Street was, until the 50s, Highway 1, it received considerable attention, such as a new bridge in 1921 over the creek and hard surfacing in 1936. Hard surfaced streets didn't become common until the fifties.

An overpass connection to the south side, after endless years of debate, became a reality only in 1960. That allowed the demolition of the long-standing pedestrian bridge at 6th N.E. over the tracks. Over a half million dollars went into a bridge replacement on 13th Ave. N.E. over the creek in



A TEAM of six hauled the grain wagon from the elevator in early days.

1974.

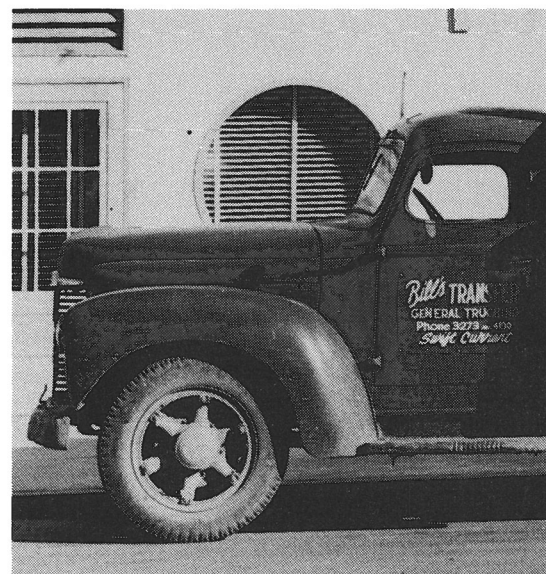
Swift Current's big move in transportation began in 1954 when excitement zoomed over the proposed TransCanada Highway, reaching a pitch in 1957 when the Saskatchewan section was opened by Premier Tommy Douglas. The delight faded momentarily eight years later, not by Premier Thatcher's announcement the highway from Regina to Swift Current would go four lane, but the further announcement the four lanes through Swift Current would be an expressway. Businesspeople were annoyed, believing they would lose the traffic of the day. That section opened in 1968.

Paving projects of city streets began to take place in the mid-fifties and in 1970, the Cheadle/Chaplin one-way couplet was initiated.

Although Swift Current has had an airport for many years, connecting air service has never caught hold. A licensed airport came about in 1931 and a \$650,000 runway was placed in 1957. Small and chartered aircraft used the facilities, but air service just hasn't held. A milk run route by Trans Air was tried, but it stopped in 1964. Another attempt was tried, it being suspended in 1970. Smith Airways moved to the airport in 1970 and began runs to Regina, but by 1971, these were suspended. In 1980 Southern Frontier Air of Calgary started up but discontinued in 1981.

The big trains of the highway, Greyhound buses, have stopped in Swift Current for some time. A bus terminal opened at Cheadle and 1st N.W. in 1957, replaced with the present, modern facility at 4th N.W. and Cheadle in 1983.

As several oldtimers have noted, mobility of people, has been the most dramatic change in the city's history.



TRUCKS became the big horsepower as the years passed right up to the modern giants of today.



From telephones to sidewalks to natural gas

The expanding of Swift Current, with an eye to real growth, necessitated attention to services to handle the advancement, both on the short and long term. The main thrust of these began about 1907.

The first telephone system appeared in the winter of 1908-09, owned by J.W. Fetter who sold out in 1911 to the provincial government. Long distance calls took root that year, at first experimental to Battleford and Edmonton, then to the east, calls west commencing by 1915. It was 1939 that long distance on the TransCanada took shape.

Electricity was pretty well through the town by 1911. Nick Carter was brought in specifically to set up an electric system for homes and businesses. Coal oil and gasoline lamps had been used up to that point and well beyond that for rural areas. Electrical output was always upgraded through the years, in 1970 residents happy to hear the unpopular loadmisers would be disengaged.

Construction of a new power plant, using steam, was also inaugurated in 1911, considered one of the most up-to-date generating stations at that time in the west. But it was built not on bedrock, but quicksand and had to be abandoned for another site. The first plant was located on 6th S.E. using coal gas as power, installing diesel in 1917. City notes in the Sun constantly refer to council discussing the power plant problems during most of the next two

decades. In July, 1930 it was sold to the Power Commission. In 1954, the modern, new power plant was officially opened.

Sewage development progressed with expansion, debentures issued to pay the cost. By 1914 water and sewage were available in 'the hill' area. Today's sewage lagoon had its construction begin in 1958.

Water supply was always from the Creek, but time also brought improvements, with a reservoir constructed on the south side in 1913, covering 100 acres to store 100 million gallons. Its costs came in at \$95,000, a staggering figure for the times. A new dam was approved for two miles south of town, east of the Exhibition Grounds, built in 1913, updates needed in 1965 to correct water taste and chemical problems. The present dam was built in 1984. A water tower was constructed at the top of Central to serve 'higher ground' in the 1920s, remaining a service until the late 60s. In 1935 a new reservoir and filtration plant are announced for the south end, the filtration plant built in 1936, the reservoir finished in 1941 and reportedly leaking four inches of water in the first 24 hours filled. The filtration plant added three filters and a precipitator in 1954, adding five more filters and a reactivator in 1961. In 1954 the city announces all water would be flouridated as soon as possible. Also in the 50s a new underground reservoir was developed in what is now the Trail

Subdivision and triple capacity was announced for the North Hill reservoir in 1968.

Plans for a public works program were complete in 1909 with three, four, six and eight-foot sidewalks on different streets. Sidewalk and street improvement had received attention earlier in 1904, for example, but revenues from village status didn't go far. A sidewalk placement, or replacement, program has been maintained since. Major sidewalk changes occurred in the downtown core in the 1980s.

The arrival of natural gas received big attention in 1955, that December the power plant switching over to become the first user of the new energy supply. Gas line work began the following spring with a gas appliance consumer show coinciding. In September, it was gas turn-on day, the Hon. Russ Brown lighting a 14-foot pylon. The first gas meter installed in the home of Gilbert Rya on 4th Ave. N.E.

Garbage disposal was also a priority through the years, the first burial at the nuisance grounds northeast happening in 1956.

From those early days, Swift Current expanded in every direction, the city matching services to growth. One of the city's greatest accomplishments in this has been the upgrading of its infrastructure, relieving this city from much of the problems being experienced today in other centres across Canada.

Families and Entertainment

What is there to do in Swift Current? The answer, of course, depends on wants, but this community's history of entertainment, pastimes and recreation, especially for the family, is extensive.

Right from the start there are things to do, but when the town began to grow, and more people arrived, when more homes and facilities began to build, the entertainment circle accompanied the rush. And, it hasn't let up.

In the early days entertainment was vital to the community for social contact, and for the district population, to get to town on a Saturday for more than their supplies. Even coming to town in winter was a joy as folks rode in sleighs. There was never a shortage of things to do.

Family picnic outings were major events for decades, surely helping Swift Current's park system get its start. Many oldtimers tell stories of these picnics, such as those held at the early Elmwood Park. It was the Knox Church Bathing Club in 1910, which helped develop the park and the adjacent sand beach area for swimming and bathing. This special treat was enjoyed for years until closing in 1974.

Fenton's Grove was another popular spot for picnics where children and adults would enjoy everything from foot races to horse races.

Picnics weren't restricted to individual families or annual events. Often, a community picnic was held to celebrate a special event. For example, perhaps the biggest picnic in the city's history was held August 3, 1921 to celebrate the opening of the Experimental Farm.

From the parks, families would watch the annual parade before heading to the fair grounds, common for many years. As these grounds achieved recreational facilities, their popularity increased. The flavor of the Sunday picnic still holds at Elmwood, evidenced each week during summer.

Swift Current's planners and thinkers, with the tremendous support of service clubs and organizations, have successfully dotted the city with an abundance of parks and playgrounds. Although the family picnic isn't held at each, family fun still is.

Going to the Fair, at two different stages of Swift Current's history, was, and is, a popular pastime. The first fair,

from about 1910 - 20, brought thousands to the grounds, at the present Cactus Park area, where a covered grandstand housed 500, and surrounding buildings held exhibits and boasted one of the finest dirt tracks for harness racing. The Fall Fair began in October 1909 during the first cold snap, soon changing to the warmer climate. Even the CPR got involved, dispatching an engine and coach near the Fairgrounds on the Vanguard line, and the livery stables would run fair-goers to the grounds.

However, the Fair petered out because of constant rain and a lack of support.

It would be 1938 when another Fair, the bigger and better Fair, in the name



A FAMILY outing for a Sunday afternoon picnic.

of Frontier Days, resurfaced to capture attention and imagination of everyone and gave Swift Current wide attention as the Frontier City and Rodeo extravaganza.

Thousands began coming to the grounds again, especially to July 1 celebrations, after 1938, so many they often couldn't be accommodated. The Kinetic Club began a new tradition that would honor Swift Current to the present day.

The lure of Hollywood wasn't lost to Swift Current movie-goers who have treated themselves to screen entertainment throughout the years. Back in 1914 there were four theatres, the best said to be the Princess Royal on 1st N.E., opened in February 1913.

Silent movies, of course, were the first order of the day, music supplied at most by a single piano, but at the Princess, by an orchestra. The talkies came to Swift Current August 27, 1929, with the playing of "The Jazz Singer" with immediate attendance increases. Swift Current's first exposure to 3-D movies happened in 1954.

Dining out wasn't a big thing in early days, but going to the movies was, followed by a trip to the ice cream parlor. The Saturday Matinee was the thrill of the week for many a year. One early resident recalls his excitement each Saturday as a young boy during the span of 1914-20 when admission was 10 cents and a pocketful of candy cost a nickle. Over time, the cinemas shrank to two, then to one, the Lyric closing not many years ago. The Drive-In captured much attention and remained a summer treat until the 1980s.

The coming of radio brought more entertainment on the home front although not on a steady diet. The first

radio signal reached here in 1923, although it wouldn't be until 1956 that a radio station hung out its shingle, CKSW on May 30. The programs that drew big attention in the family living room were the simply-not-to-be-missed World Series, Hockey Night in Canada and highly popular shows like Amos and Andy, the Happy Gang, and Fibber McGee and Molly. The World Series was so popular on radio, men in the Healy Hotel would set up line scores and ran pools through the forties and early fifties.

Through the years listeners were astute for war news, election happenings, reports of sports, and the like, and the coming of local radio drew

steadier listeners for all the happenings. Art Wallman's popularity grew over the span of CKSW history and in the 80s the city had a second station, FM-94 with a new sound.

Television began to change the style of entertainment locally, as it did elsewhere. On December 19, 1957 the first test on the newly created CJFB-TV was broadcast and Swift Currentonians were slowly drawn to the tube on an ever increasing scale. Now people could begin to see, in their homes, what before they could only listen to or see at the theatre.

In the 1970s a second channel arrived here, CTV from Regina and in the 80s Swift Current Cablevision began



CKSW came on the air on May 30, 1956.

. . . families

extending the television entertainment scene.

Concerts, plays, performers and the like carry quite a history through Swift Current's growth, from vaudeville and comedy acts in the twenties to the fine performances brought here today by the Allied Arts Council.

Everyone performed

Thousands of loyal patrons have supported a multitude of groups, from creative drama to comedy acts, from plays performed at Central School to creative drama today. Many a play or concert was highlighted, sometimes for no other reason than to bring people together. Dance groups have been numerous with various backgrounds, as have been fine music teachers and classes, too many to mention. Swift Current had a full band performing early in the century and has continued to put forward fine groups, adult and youth alike, be it at the community level or in the schools.

Skimming through today's list of such performing groups, the range is immense from theatre and square dancing and Ukrainian dancing to schools of dance; from band auxiliary to adult band; from Barbershoppers to Old Tyme Fiddlers; from Allied Arts to the Artist Guild; from writers groups to photography associations.

Fun, or passing the time, never changes, only the way it's done. In the

early years teenagers often gathered to watch horse breaking at the Healy corral, whereas years later they studied the new sports model in cars. Youngsters used to sleigh ride down the Central Avenue and 3rd N.E. hills, said to be the best in town. Later they moved to the golf club hills. Sports groups quickly formed and where they weren't, summer or winter games were always found.

Youngsters back when invented games; today its video.

The circus came to town

Yet, youngsters are youngsters, and many an oldtimer now will tell colorful stories of the circus coming to town, arriving by train at night and staying the next day. Today, the circus arrives by truck. An old Sun photo of 1915-16 showed hundreds of anxious kids waiting for the show. It was like a holiday, they say.

In the 1920s the Slick and Jones show would arrive, gathering folks together who liked to sing and dance. Many shows were held in the Lyric Theatre, built in 1912. A decade later local folk joined in the famous Major Bowes talent contest and soon after young men were helping sell war bonds and preparing for the coming battle. In the next decade baby boomers were born and teenagers a few years later entered the era of rock'n roll, then the Beatles and the 60s, the quieter 70s and the recession

80s.

Through it all, there were dances. Always dances. At the hotels, many a formal dance was held allowing the ladies to buy that new long dress and halls in the growing community were important places for dances over the

Dances were very popular

years. If there wasn't a specific reason, local events usually sparked a dance to follow. Community dances were very popular through the thirties and during the early forties.

The community responded in mass to special events, such as the first July 1 national holiday in 1904 where thousands were on hand. Sometimes there was disappointment, like May 30, 1939 when some 6,000 people appeared at the Railway Station to see the King and Queen of England, but the Royal Couple didn't appear on the platform.

About 3,000 people attended the Jubilee celebration on July 4, 1933. Hundreds of people turned out to birthday celebrations through the years such as the city's 25th and 50th, the settlement's 100th, the province's 75th.

And, entertainment wasn't confined to outdoor or community levels. The social calendar of the building rush era was filled with some fine home parties, often being major events of the season.

What has there been to do in Swift Current? Plenty!

Spirit: Swift Current has proud history

Any town or city must be more than buildings, homes, streets and municipal services. It must have spirit, drive, a community desire to pull together, and the will to accomplish what the municipal coffers cannot do alone.

There are literally scores of stories of individuals and groups helping one another and scores more of groups building a social, recreational or community framework for the growing centre.

In the early days new arrivals shared a spirit of togetherness during Indian scares, in making what they could of a tiny hamlet on the bald prairie, of sharing food, helping load heavy burdens, sharing scant accommodation.

As businesses set in many were helped by running tabs until money

arrived.

During health epidemics, such as the great flu in 1918, people rallied to help their neighbour.

Through the depression, mothers fed transients food from the kitchen door of the house. During that same span of time, seldom would a neighbor turn his back where help was needed. Unemployment ran high during the twenties and thirties and it was a time to help the other guy, which Swift Current did, time and time again. Not all went smoothly, however, as transients caused tension. An effort, led by Mayor O.M. Irwin, to provide relief for the unemployed, had to be cancelled because of the transients.

When those huge fires endangered the village or town, dozens of people would

aid firefighters.

The war years brought people together to sell bonds, hear the latest news, to pray together for sons in battle.

We can't forget the millions of dollars that have been raised for charity or organizations through Swift Current's history. For example, there used to be Tag Days that raised money for every kind of good cause and when the United Appeal began in the sixties, Swift Current showed great support.

Citizen support of worthwhile endeavors was always strong as it was in 1985 when Steve Fonyo came through to complete the run began by Terry Fox, and again in 1987 when Rick Hansen was on the last leg of his world wide wheelchair event. As said, the stories are endless. These have been but a few, clearly demonstrating the long-standing desire in this city to be more than simply a place to live.

There's another story worth telling --how social attitude helped bring much more to Swift Current.

Social growth is vibrant

There are also many stories to tell of Swift Current's social development. They range from the establishment of fine institutions, to projects backed by service clubs, to community events, to the long-lasting debate whether Swift Current should be 'wet' or 'dry'.

These are but a few of those stories. Readers will find more under clubs and organizations in the text, and at the back of this book.

INSTITUTIONAL -- New library quarters came on stream in 1921, housed with

municipal offices, then obtained better quarters in 1929 on 2nd N.E. Five decades later the concept of a library/art gallery was approved and in 1974 the beautiful, modern building, named after former Mayor R.C. Dahl, opened on Herbert St. E. The Chinook Regional Library got the go ahead, and opened, in 1971. In 1934 a community museum opened at Central School, years later to have its own building on Chaplin E.

A veterans housing project began

construction in the 1940's. These homes, built during a serious housing shortage, were mostly 1½ story dwellings, 24 foot by 24 foot, scattered on 5th N.W., 7th N.W., 2nd and 3rd N.E. and some on the south side. They were allotted on a point system, only to war vets.

In May, 1958 the Prairie Pioneer Lodge took in its first tenants, the Geriatric Centre opened in 1963, seniors housing building Heritage Towers in 1976, the

Southwest Ability Centre in 1978, a Crisis Service in 1985, a new seniors complex, Golden West Manor in 1988, the Senior Citizens Activity Centre in 1974, to name a few. The Seniors Activity Centre opened in March, 1974.

Several post office locations were used over the years with many postmasters and different stages of postal service, such as mail delivery to homes which began in 1947.

FROM RATS TO LIQUOR -- Swift Current has had its share of other social happenings. In 1947 local youngsters staged a protest over the rise in chocolate bar prices, climbing to 8 cents, from 5. They lost.

From 1945-47 the city had a rat problem and a rat hunt was underway, the people winning.

Of course, Swift Current had its prostitutes and houses of prostitution, the most famous of these being the North and South houses. Prostitutes could be easily identified on the street from their heavy make-up.

Perhaps the most interesting series of stories were the local debates through the years as to whether Swift Current should be 'wet' or 'dry', that is serve liquor or not. In the early settlement, liquor was not only scarce, but illegal and people took sides on their choice. Many Temperance Leagues formed.

Swift Current had two prohibition periods -- 1915-22 when bars in hotels were closed and in conjunction with the American term. There were many bootleggers there to fill the needs.

After cityhood, on December 12, 1916, residents voted 714 to 62 to abolish the liquor store. Again in 1920, citizens voted to stay dry and it wasn't until 1925 that liquor stores opened. A beer plebiscite was defeated in 1934

and a year later voters supported licensed beer parlors after 'dry' groups forced another plebiscite.

By the 50s these actions were in the past, several local halls, like the Legion and Elks had liquor. But, to increase liquor outlets, the people said no to five new locations in November, 1959. In December, 1964 the people voted by a 2-1 margin to go 'wet'.

Speaking of voting, Mrs. J.T. Dodds was the first woman to register for voting in September, 1916. The first woman to run as a federal candidate from Swift Current was Mrs. James O. (Genevieve) Begg for the Conservatives. She lost to Liberal Tom Bentley. Patricia Smith was the first female M.L.A. elected from Swift Current and one of two women first appointed a cabinet minister at the provincial level.

Early Swift Current didn't have much serious crime, but that isn't to say it didn't exist. For example, two Chinese men were charged with smoking opium in the basement of a house on Railway.

TITLES --Our city has had its fair share of young ladies winning special titles and contests. In the 50s, Swift Current girls won the Miss Roughrider title two years running, Lynda Fleming in 1954 and Francis Stewart in 1955. In February, 1980 Michelle Allsen was crowned the first Miss Blizzard during Blizzard Week.

And, Miss Teen Swift Current winners of the 80s were city favorites. Patricia Gustafson won the first in 1983; Karen MacBean in 1984; Tracy Davis, 1985; Jodie Stark, 1986; Sherri Erick, 1987. All of Swift Current remembers that Karen MacBean, in March of 1984, took her Miss Teen Swift Current crown to Toronto, coming away with the Miss Teen Canada honors. She was

welcomed home to a civic dinner.

Recognizing citizens, and groups, who have given much to their community has been a special project of the Chamber of Commerce in recent years. Their Citizen of the Year and Award of Merit presentations have been made annually since 1984. Rita Helm and the Old Time Fiddlers won in '84, Terry Newton Anderson and the Kinsmen Club in '85, Bernice Chalmers and Elaine Murchie in '86, Jack Hamer and the pair of Gladys Klemke and Mabel Walker in '87, and Jack Smith and Dorothy Burnett in '88.

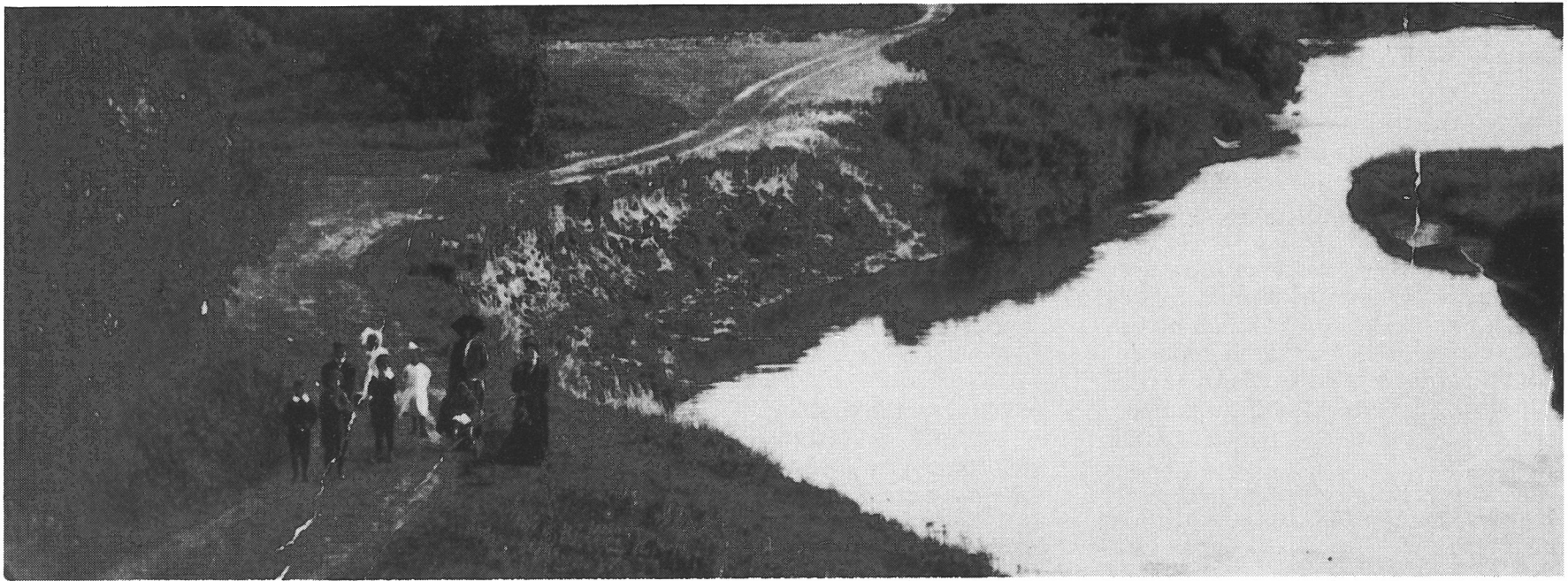
The Chamber had a Citizen of the Year Award once before, in 1949, the winners were Mrs. James O. Begg and James Aitken.

Musical notations have been many. Here are but two. In 1963 Swift Current's Junior Band won 1st and 2nd honors at the Annual Band Competition in Toronto and were welcomed home to a ticker-tape parade. In 1984, the 21-member Swift Current Comprehensive High School Jazz Band was named the best in Canada.

Numerous community-wide programs have been initiated over the years to help people, especially the young. The RCMP suggested Spookorama in the 70s, taken on by Kiwanis; Neighborhood Watch began in the 80s as did the Operation Kid, sponsored by the Kinsmen Club, a project so successful it drew national attention.

This is a community which cares, which has strived to provide the best possible, to safeguard, to better, and to promote. Through all this, Swift Current's success has been greatly helped.

Hospital development can be found under 'health' in this book.



CHANGING SITES, CHANGING SEASONS

FENTON'S GROVE was a popular location for family outings early in the century until it was flooded for local improvements. Today, Swift Current has many park areas for fun and relaxation, even during the winter season.



Excellent health care growth

Before the first doctor, or dentist, or drug store established in Swift Current, pioneers mostly fended for themselves, or called on Hilliard Gregory.

Gregory, a great friend of the Indians, and one of the very early white settlers, on many occasions answered the call of dentist and doctor using Indian herbs in some treatments. The natives called him 'Wepetuh' (His Teeth) because of poor-fitting false teeth and he earned the gratitude of many a pioneer for his services.

The first practising doctor in the village was W.H. Field, arriving in 1903. Other early practitioners included Dr. Louis Hoppin and Dr. A.E. Kelly. Over a decade later, in 1918, the Clinic on Central opened, the first of its kind in Saskatchewan, with several doctors including O.M. Irwin. The first real

dentist was Dr. Herbert Lake.

The town had two drugstores by 1908, one run by T.W. Hutchinson, where Bradbrooke's is now, the other J.P. Rooney's store. Drug stores became very important to the community, people relying on them sometimes for ingredients for their home remedies.

HOSPITAL HISTORY

By 1908, the town had no hospital, but did have a private nursing home run by Mrs. Warn, caring for 68 patients at one point. Later Miss McLean opened a cottage hospital. By 1911 a hospital board of management was appointed, a general hospital opening in 1912, this facility taken over by the Swift Current Union Hospital Board, with Mayor W.K. Rutherford as chairman, on December

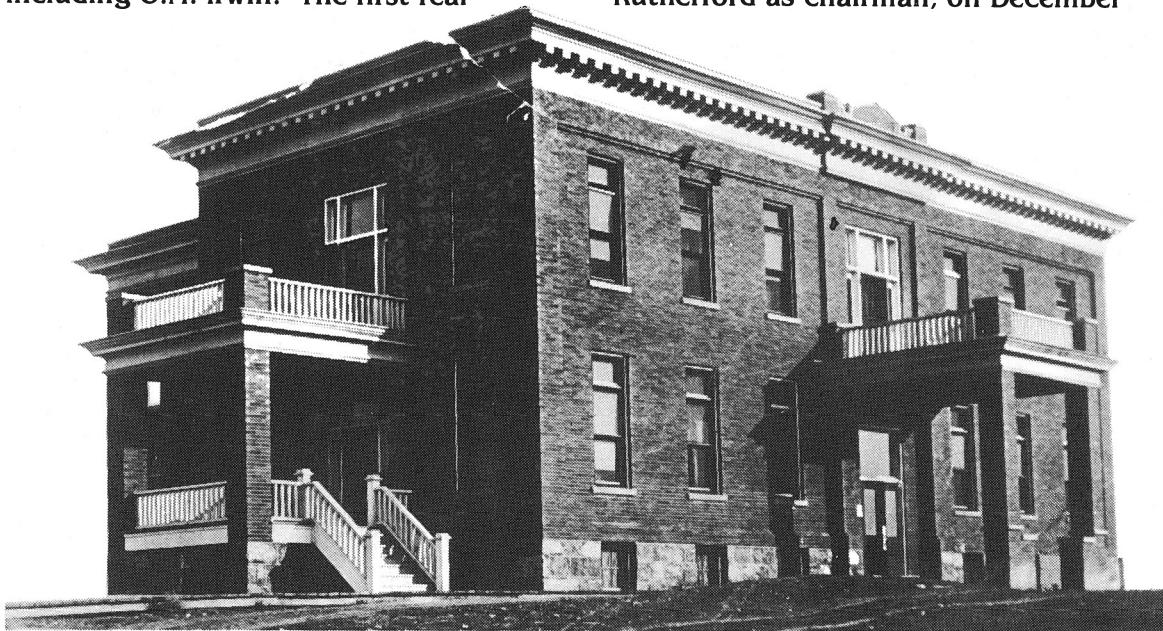
30, 1947. Construction of the Union Hospital began in 1948 (the same year an ambulance service was announced; the hospital getting its first ambulance in 1952 which it would operate for 21 years) and opened on June 23, 1952. During its first year of operation, the hospital stats showed 504 patients treated, 205 being surgical cases and 39 births were recorded. A west wing was added in 1957, the nurses residence in 1958. The old hospital, immediately south of the new structure, was razed in 1962 and the modern wing put up in 1969. When the parking lot was levelled and enlarged in 1970, some skeletons were uncovered, apparently from an Indian burial ground. These were moved to the city cemetery. Sod was turned for an expansion to the hospital in 1970 and a psychiatric ward included in 1978.

OTHER FACILITIES -- More fine medical facilities opened across the city over the years, the Palliser Hospital, serving the elderly, in 1963, the same year the Geriatric Centre became a reality. The Swift Current Nursing Home opened in 1967, offering total nursing care, and that same year the 7th Day Adventist Nursing Home began operation.

HISTORIC EVENT

During the provincial election of 1944, Tommy Douglas promised to set up a system of socialized medicine -- without charge. Once elected he set that promise into motion.

In 1946 Health Region No. 1, a pilot



project for a proposed province-wide health care plan, was formed with Swift Current gaining international recognition. Medical history was made when it became the first government funded medical scheme in North America, the first to combine public health and medical-care program.

On May 1, 1946, full-time, public health staff began supervision of all preventive medical services including immunization, sanitary control, home and school nursing and control of communicable disease. Dr. Arthur Peart was the first Medical Health Officer. The first Regional Board of Health was established, which remained in place until 1980.

Prepaid hospitalization was introduced in 1947 and on April 8, 1948 Premier Douglas spoke at the opening of a health centre in the Yeager building on Cheadle East, which would stand until demolished in 1986. A permanent mental health clinic was established a decade later. Full implementation of the Medicare plan for the province came in 1962.

Hospital Auxiliary

Hospital care throughout Swift Current's history has been greatly enhanced by the Ladies Auxiliary through fund raising, patient comfort and furnishings.

The first group, the Women's Hospital Aid Society, began the same year ideas were being formulated for a hospital, 1911. When the Union Hospital became a reality in 1948, the name changed to

the Union Hospital Ladies Auxiliary in 1950, affiliated with the Health-Care Auxiliaries Association of Saskatchewan in District 4. Women of all ages, denominations and walks of life have been members.

Materials were bought for the early hospital and members and friends made pajamas, diapers, surgical drops and gowns. Through the years the ladies have provided furnishing for the Nurses' Residents, wards, the Chapel. They

gather books and magazines for patients, toys for the children's ward, decorate rooms, even purchase equipment such as vital signs monitors and a \$10,000 Century Tub. The group developed the Candy Striper Program and also awards scholarships to graduates entering the nursing field.

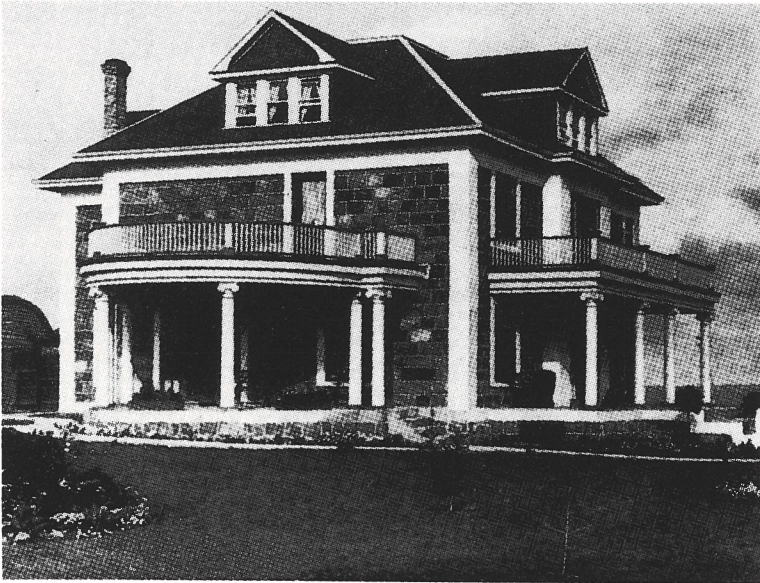
Their objective of making the patient's stay as comfortable as possible has certainly been accomplished.



A VIEW to our present hospital facility.



THE BEAUTIFUL CUTBANKS AT SWIFT CURRENT'S SOUTH END



THEN:

W.W. EDMANSON had this stately home built around 1909 or 1910 before the rush of similar grand houses were built on the slope of the hill to the east. Mr. Edmanston was a real estate agent at the

time. For about two years the house was a sole landmark splitting the open prairie and the growing town. It also had an extensive, landscaped yard.

NOW:

THE EDMANSON house has been altered quite a bit over the years with balcony changes and other additions. Now, it is an apartment building and for several decades previously, served as a convent. It was during that period when the addition was put on.



Housing paces City's span

Dominated by the railway, Swift Current's housing development took root from the track area. By 1883 there were about seven houses, all simple, one-storey frame homes, all facing the tracks, on the north side. Progress from there, however, was sporadic until after the turn of the century.

Surveying had laid lots out from the tracks, north, east and west of the centre, the railway claiming some land south of the tracks, that area for a time, viewed as 'another place.'

Serious housing development basically waited until 1905-06 to gather steam, peaked through 1910-15, levelling off with the war. It was during this rush, too, that homesteading was at its height and the growing town expanded its boundaries and sought more room from the province.

From the track area, surveying

branched out further along Railway, east and west, to the north towards the "Hill", beyond the growing business district. Lots began to develop where new housing would look down to the growing business area, up near Herbert and Lorne. Some houses appeared up Central from Herbert and began to spread east into 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th N.E. A 1909 photo showed housing out to 6th N.E., but only north a block or two.

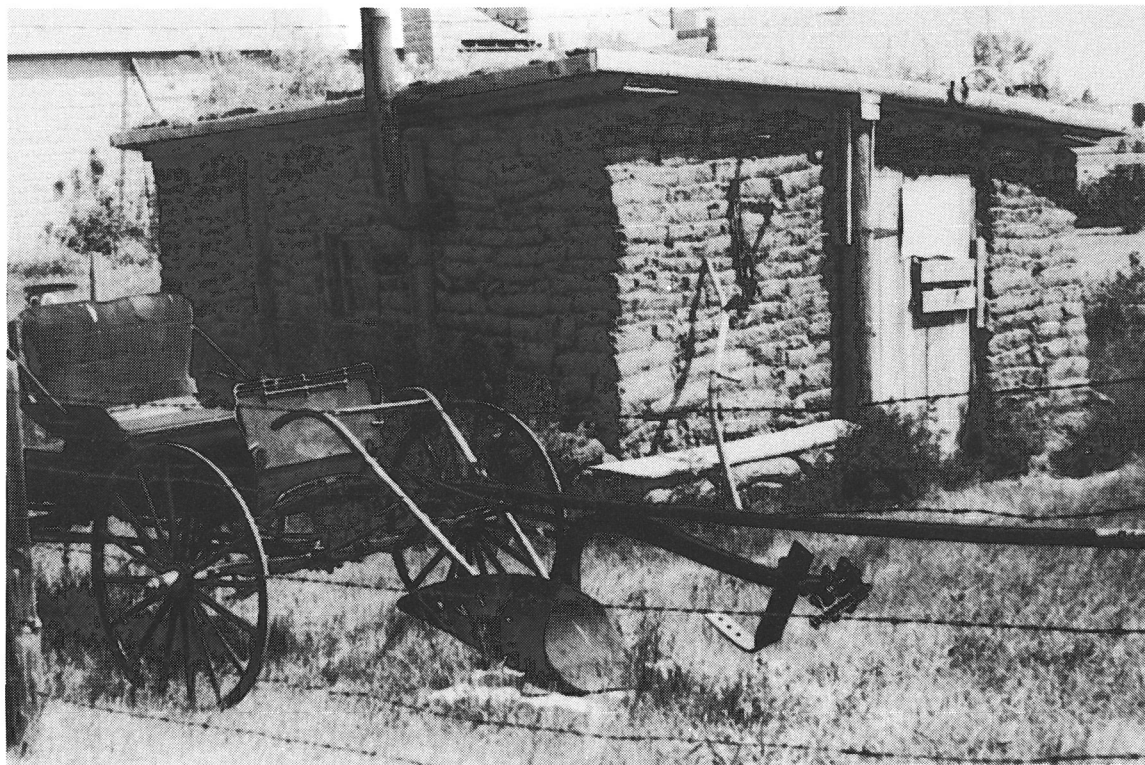
Beautiful homes were built. For example, Hoffman Powley's father

designed, and the Gilstrom Brothers built, the house now occupied by Culham-Bowers Funeral Home. No other houses were around it at the time and there was no sewer, water or electricity. Its cost, Hoffman recalls, was \$18,000.

Other houses in this area began to spring up through the teens, built by Jack Furnis, Alex Yeager, Beecher Mann, Ed McKenzie, W.O. Smythe, Dr. McLean, Billy Yeager, the Forrester family, Ted Hemingway, Charlie Bothwell, Bill Lester, Bill Glaister, A.J. Sharpe, the Kimball family and the huge Edmonson



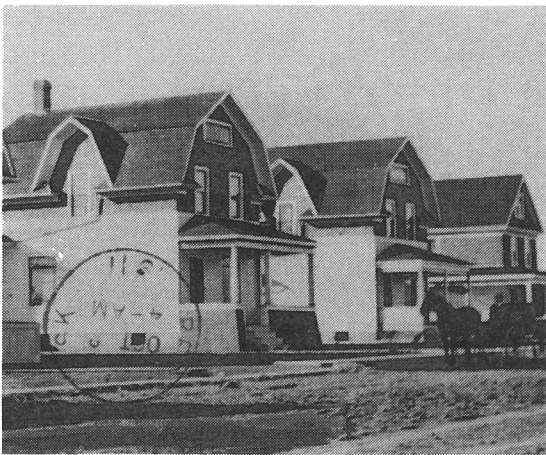
H.C. Powley house
(Culham-Bowers Funeral Home)
Designated Heritage Site in 1985



A TYPICAL SOD HOUSE OF EARLY YEARS

house at Dufferin and Central.

New subdivisions had begun to open, too, in the eastern part of town, south of the Elmwood Park area and north of



ABOVE, in 1911 these houses on 9th N.E. were featured on a local postcard. Below, decades later the style of homes has dramatically changed.



the creek. Elmwood Boulevard was one as was Webster Heights and the Riverdene subdivision was brought about, as were others in the east and west. Through these times, often richer folk would buy land and subdivide. Two and three storey homes, of lumber, stone and brick gained favor, the first California bungalow built in 1912.

The beautiful courthouse on Sydney West was constructed in 1913 and Central School, at the top of the hill on Dufferin West, came about in 1914, the west side developed residential areas around them. Further south on the west side, lots were opened to 4th and 5th N.W., later coming 6th and 7th, forcing a jog in Sydney W. A photo of 1912 looking northwest from about 5th N.E. and Central shows housing has spread considerably east and west from Central and up to the top of the Central Hill,

although still many vacant lots..

South of the tracks was not officially a part of the town, the rural council calling it 'South Swift Current' in 1911. Soon it would be incorporated and grow with the same housing enthusiasm as its northern neighbour. Later, the south side would see some of the biggest development.

After World War I, the city would grow at its own pace until during the Second World War when many war-time houses bloomed, and soon afterward came a housing shortage. Many say it wasn't until the 50s that people had a selection in style of houses when, through the mid to late 50s and early 60s, construction had difficulty keeping up with demand. Over 1,400 new dwellings were constructed during that span of time.

The city fully branched out from 6th N.E., north of the creek, into North Hill in the fifties, and south of the creek from 13th out to the Civic Centre in the sixties.

In 1959, the first steps were taken to control shacktowns on west end, north of highway and along the east portion of the south side.

A few acreage homes existed in what would be the Trail Subdivision when it began to develop in the seventies, once the Wheatland Mall was constructed.

Through all the years Swift Current would open new subdivisions to meet demand, as it is now with the Highland Subdivision, west of Trail.

Through the years, as photographs show, Swift Current people took pride in their homes and property, beautiful flower gardens and trimmed grass evident. This in a land where moisture couldn't be counted on, but civic pride could be.



PICTURESQUE:

RAY THEODORE Graham, who would become MP in 1940-45, had this lovely home built by the hospital on 4th N.W. Many large homes were built in the area during the housing rush years described in the accompanying story. Graham came here as a bank teller and would become a lawyer.

RIVERDENE:

HOUSING development spread East during the 1910-1915 period, new subdivisions being created, one being the Riverdene area East of 6th N.E., below the hill.





PIPER'S addition, the house above being one in the area, was another early subdivision, on the southside, south and east of the creek. The northeast, top right, was developed in the 50s and 60s and Trail, bottom right, in the 70s and 80s.

Through the years in the kitchen

While today's modern services in the home are basically taken for granted, the same could be said 75 years ago --the appliance, or utensil, method or manner, was generally the latest available.

Streamline electric or gas ranges today, with convenient ovens and perhaps a microwave nearby are common. Even the basic home early this century had a wood burning stove, bigger in size perhaps and less convenient than today, but nevertheless, reliable and capable.

Baking bread was an everyday occurrence for early families with bread and milk delivery a daily event on a grand scale well into the 1940s. For a time even meat was home delivered. Milk wasn't as easy to obtain, for it wasn't pasteurized and arrived by train where it was processed into bottles, and cream could be made.

The old ice box, common for years, was a major convenience with ice for the upper portion delivered in blocks. More modern refrigerators, the most common Frigidaires, began to come on the scene by the twenties, accompanied by other home helpers during a flurry of a technologically-advanced line of consumer goods. The pace of new goods would be even faster after the Second World War.

Early heating was coal generated, carrying on for some time. When coal was in ill-supply, the community suffered, such as in 1909 when supply was next to nothing. People burned straw, manure, fence posts and even

flooring. Coal was most often sold through lumber yards and delivered to houses by wagons, then trucks, everyone having a coal bin. Coal stoves became common in the kitchen, coal furnaces for the home.

Houses were lit by candle, by coal oil or gasoline lamps until electricity arrived, beginning in 1911.

Back in the kitchen, jellies and jams were made and preserved as fruit didn't arrive year-round, and at the railyards, box cars of produce used to arrive with large amounts purchased right from the cars on South Railway, at the west end

of town. This practise continued to the 40s. When refrigerated trucks began to arrive the old way began to fade.

There were other ways to get produce. Many farmers through the district grew vegetables and sold them to city stores and people could buy some from Chinese market gardens going door-to-door.

Today, we visit our supermarket, or convenience stores, for all our goods. Although home baking, preserving and other cooking is still happening, it is by choice, not necessity. That, of course, is progress.



MORE MODERN HOMES

Agriculture: key to success

Swift Current was born and raised on agriculture. Today, its influence is as major as 75 years ago, although industrial development has greatly helped it diversify.

The Swift Current agriculture district encompasses crop districts 3B and 4, roughly bounded on the east by a line through Morse, Hodgeville and McCord, on the north by the river, on the west and south by the borders. Rural Municipalities included are 137, 138, 166 and 167.

Statistics from 1986 show there were

6,577 farms in the southwest area producing these major crops: durum and spring wheat and barley as the major cereal crops; oats, but much less than olden days; specialty crops, such as lentils, canary seed, mustard and canola, partly due to irrigation and improved varietal development; and forage crops are also grown as is fall rye and winter wheat on some of the lighter land, winter wheat dropping off in recent years.

The cattle industry is also a major aspect for the southwest. In 1986 there

were 137,072 beef cows on the land. Many of the community and government pastures were developed in the 1930's when farm land was abandoned, reclaimed by seeding to forage cover and developed as pastures.

There are still many large ranch operations in the area, some into the third and fourth generations.

The district is noted for its droughts, soil erosion, etc., through all its history, but equally so is known for its bumper crops.

. . . station backs famers

Southwest Saskatchewan's semi-arid conditions, vulnerable to drought and grasshoppers, among other things, sparked as early as 1910, interest in having an experimental research farm here in Swift Current.

That interest germinated action in 1920 as the House of Commons heard the agriculture minister urge such a farm for a territory he described as a prolongation of the Great American Desert. On August 20th an order inacted the farm and by November

construction work began. Years later its name would become the Agricultural Research Station.

Other agriculture steps were taken in early and later years such as the use of summerfallow, irrigation systems, Swift Current's first modern elevator in 1923, the completion of the Community Pasture Project in 1938, the building of Duncairn dam started in 1941 and much work by the PFRA.

Many fine scientists have worked at the centre providing support,

information, study and discoveries to the farming and livestock industries, particularly for district conditions. In recent years the Research Station has published extensive histories of their work for readers wanting to expand on these accomplishments.

The history of this station is extensive and those achievements of major importance to Saskatchewan's chief industry, agriculture.

Keeping track of the weather

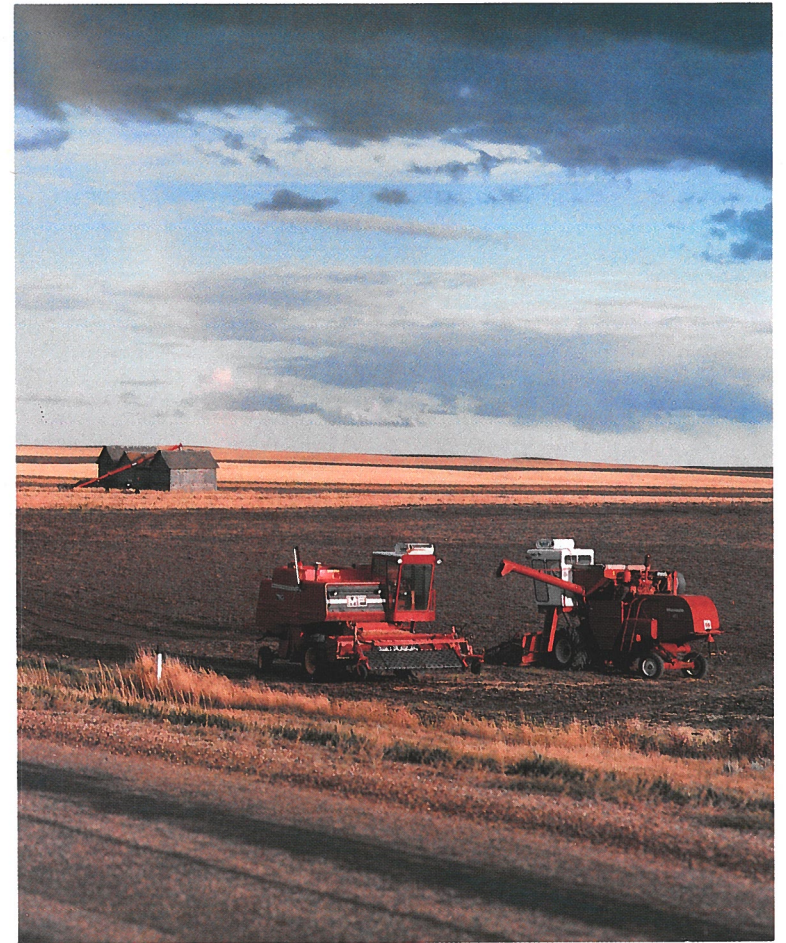
Charting weather patterns has been a tradition in Swift Current since 1885 when the Dominion Meteorological Station was established.

Today, the Agriculture Research Station performs this vital service, by computer, on a 24-hour basis.

Computers weren't available to the station's first official observer, William Knight, who was a Mountie, homesteader, and the first white man to be married here. Knight was followed by William Vaudrevils in 1896 who kept the post until 1913 when a Captain

McKay took over at his place in Riverside Park.

A Radio Range Station near Elmwood Golf Course was the next spot, then the service found a permanent home at the Experimental Farm in 1921.



AGRICULTURE:

BORN AND raised on agriculture, Swift Current still prizes its growing lands. Being a semi-arid region, however, does bring its drawbacks what with drought and soil erosion. But, it is also known for its bumper crops.





CATTLE:

THE CATTLE industry has been a major player since Swift Current's early days. Famous ranches like the '76 were here before the turn of the century. Today, the industry still thrives throughout the area.



OIL/ GAS:

A BONANZA hit in 1952 with the discovery of oil at Fosterton, creating a big industry for the area. Natural gas is booming now and was being searched out as early as 1913, as shown above, just south of town.



Black Gold

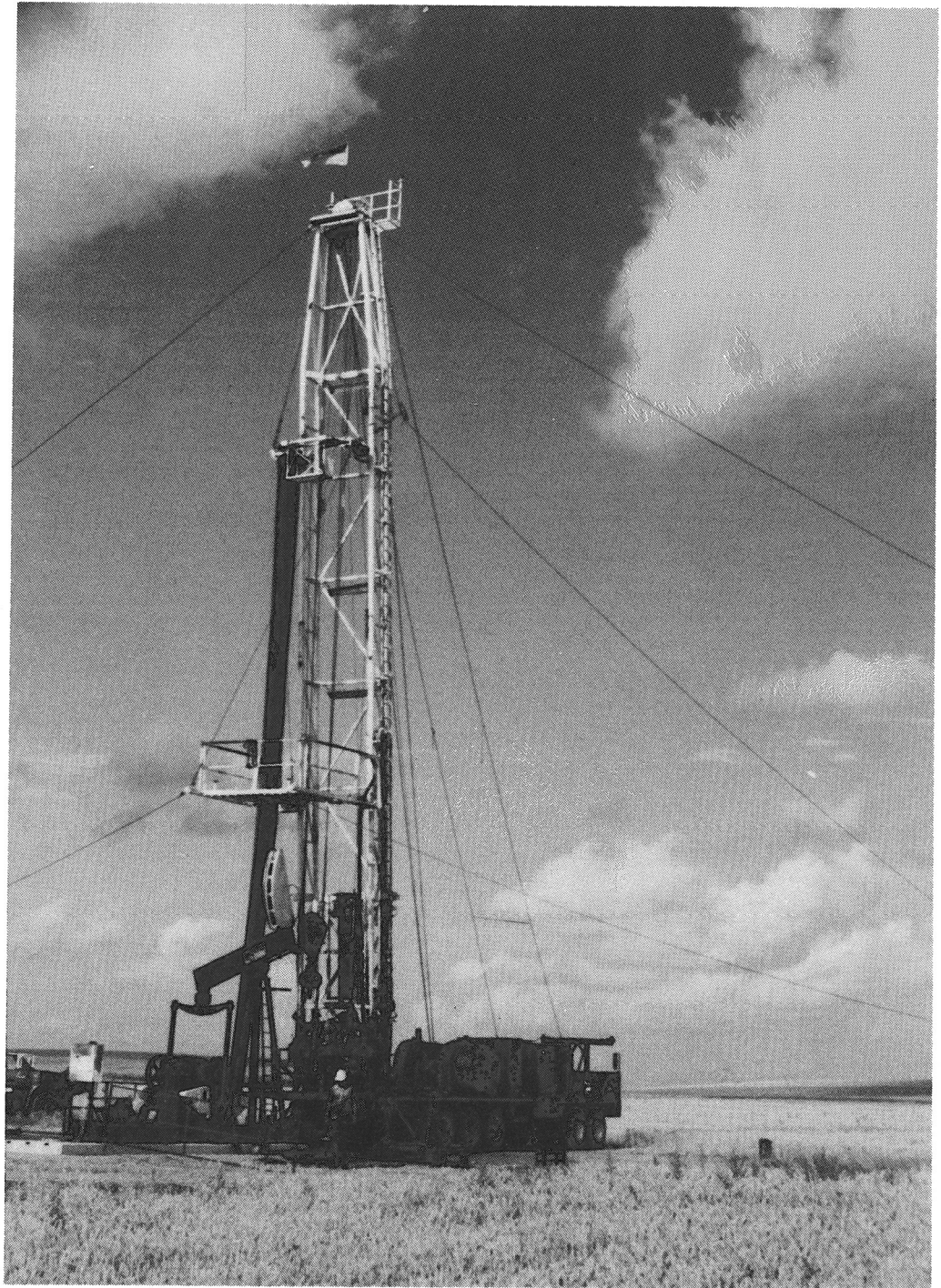
Bonanza! That was the feeling in 1952 as the Swift Current area celebrated the discovery of oil. In three short decades the oil industry, which grew from that find, has provided the city and district with economic good fortune.

Many drilling and service industry companies have established here over these years providing several thousand direct and indirect jobs; injecting millions into the rural and municipal coffers; hundreds of thousands of dollars to community causes; and centering attention on southwest Saskatchewan's famous crude.

In the decade following Swift Current's average net income soared to the highest in Canada.

The Fosterton strike in 1952, about 30 miles northwest of here, on Harry Lowick's farm, by the Socony-Vacuum Exploration Company, created the first commercial oil find with more following at Success, Cantuar, North Premier and Midway. As years ticked by, drilling rigs were seen on farms throughout the district, even in the city limits. A major oil pipeline from Cantuar to Regina was built and southwest players have had their role in other major projects.

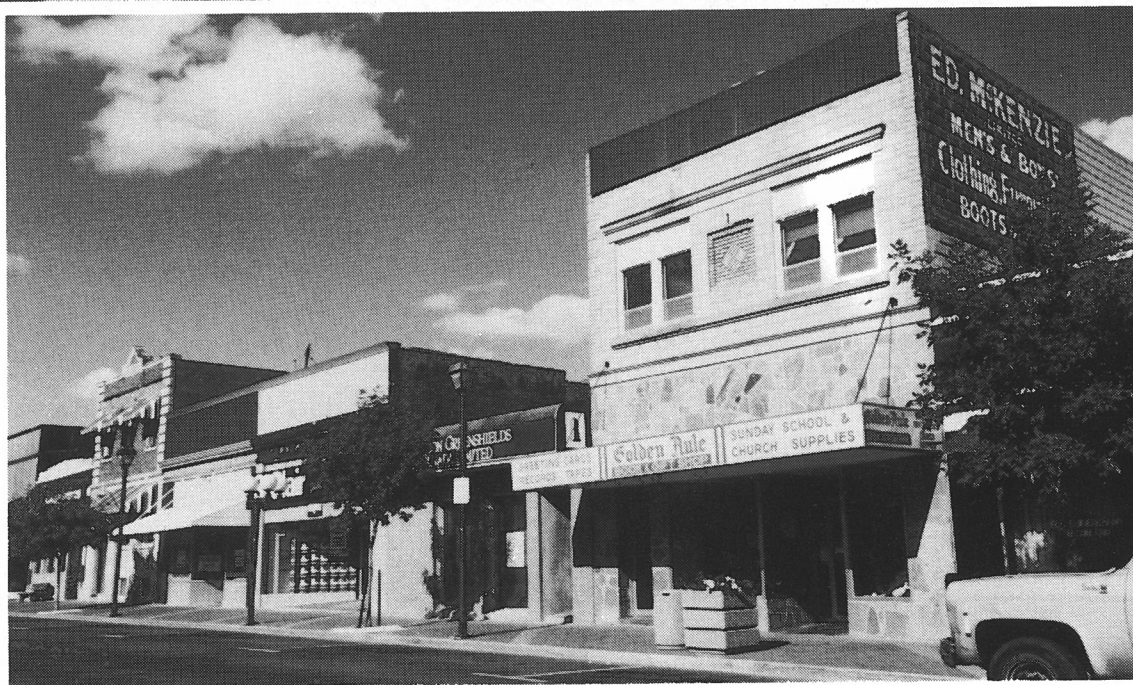
The industry's growth through the years has been substantial, in more recent years however, subject to the whims and quotas of OPEC. Saskatchewan is Canada's second largest producer of crude oil, next to Alberta.





40 YEARS APART

TWO VIEWS of the east side of Central, the top photo taken in about 1940, below taken in 1988. The Ed McKenzie sign north demonstrates some of the changes during the time span.





THEN & NOW:

TIMES CHANGE, buildings change as shown here. Pioneer Co-op had the location at Chaplin and 4th N.W.; now the Cypress Hills Regional College is situated there.





THEN & NOW:

ANOTHER example of changes through the years is at Cheadle and 4th Avenue N.W. For a number of years the Saskatchewan Co-operative Creamery was located on the Southeast corner, replaced by the E.I. Wood Provincial Building. There are so many examples of such changes in the city's history, these are but two of them.



Beautiful Pathway

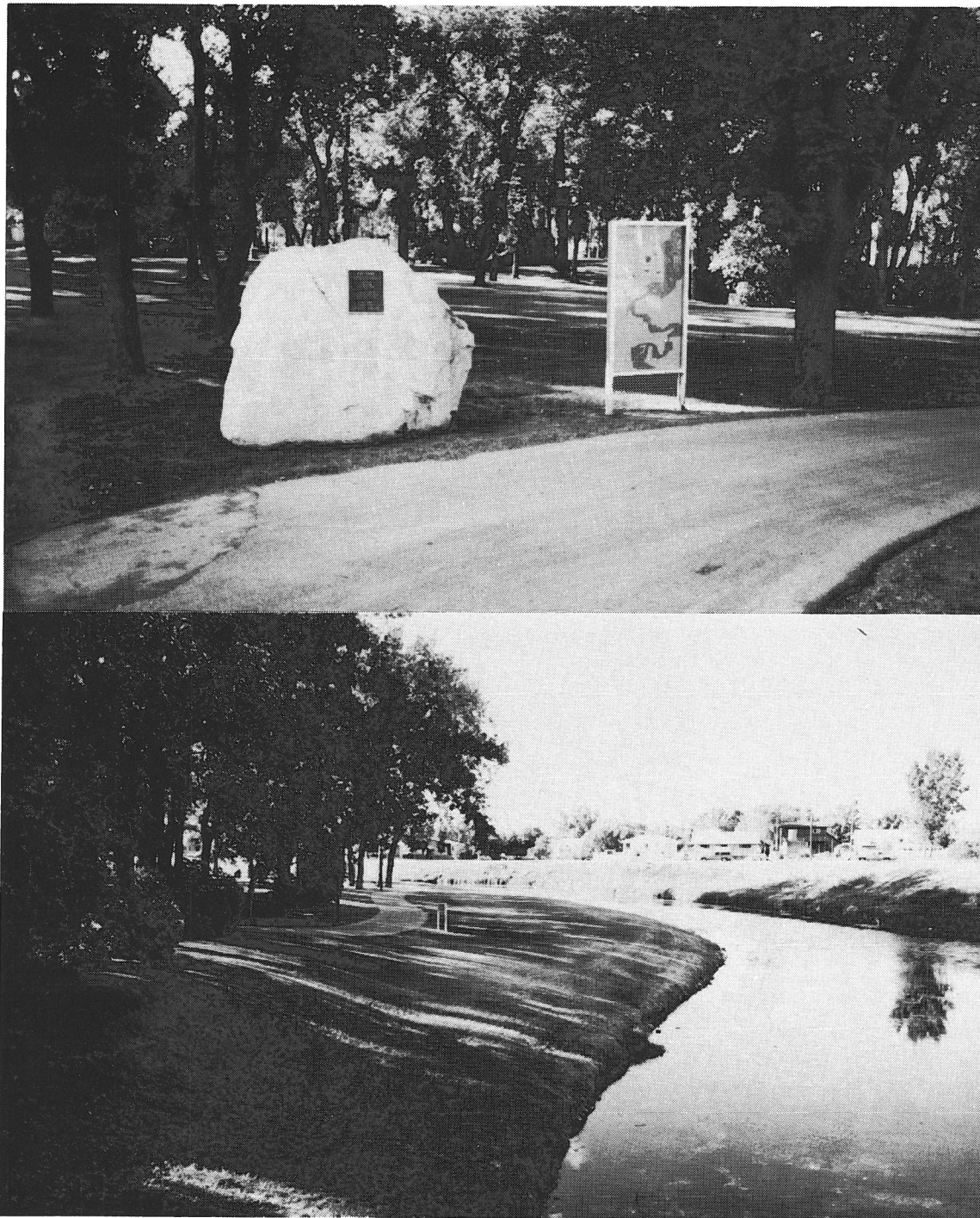
Walking, jogging, cycling, sports, leisure -- residents have got it all in the city's latest recreation development, the Chinook Parkway, constructed and opened in the 80s.

Since its first-phase in 1984-85, the pathway, which winds along a 255 hectare, 3.2 kilometre length, adjoining the Swift Current Creek, has drawn thousands of folks out to enjoy the outdoors. Beginning at the Trans Canada, the Parkway extends by the popular and picturesque Elmwood Golf Club all the way to the south end of the city, passing through Elmwood and Riverdene Parks.

Its course features the pathway for walking and cycling, ball diamonds, rain/sun shelters, playing fields, tennis courts, even horseshoe pitches. Soon, its second phase will bring more development, including another major golf course at its south end.

An agreement to build the Parkway was reached between the City and major financial contribution, the province, in 1984 after years of work, with the Devonian Institute contributing towards the pathway. Two mayors, Al Rittinger who saw the Parkway through its major first steps, and Len Stein, who saw it completed and leads in its further development, were on hand for the official opening in June 1986. MLA Pat Smith represented the province.

Residents of all ages take advantage of the Parkway for physical betterment and to enjoy nature's beauty.



Other birthdays . . .

Celebrating anniversaries has been a tradition for Swift Current. This year, 1989, the city's 75th year since incorporation is commemorated with parties, a Homecoming and much public participation.

Likewise, community spirit has glowed on previous calendar occasions.

In 1933 a crowd of about 3,000 gathered at Swift Current's Golden Jubilee on Dominion Day marking the 50th year since being founded. All was preceded by a parade with Walter Knight, the first white born here, in the place of honor.

Mr. and Mrs. J.S. Primmer, 81 and 80, were the oldtimers of the parade, with party guests including Premier J.T.M. Anderson and Chief Justice Sir Frederick Haultain. A plaque commemorating the event is posted at city hall.

Frontier Days was the venue for a 75th birthday since founding which brought Lt. Gov. Frank Bastedo for the opening with Mayor Bob Dahl and MP Jack McIntosh at hand to honor Mr. and Mrs. Robert Watson, representing district pioneers. Unfortunately, a heavy downpour short-circuited some of the ceremonies.

In 1882 the city celebrated its 100th birthday of existence with a January 16 bonfire of Christmas trees and a dance. Later in the year, June 6, a Centennial Day Picnic brought out 1,500 people and June 27 through July 3 a local businesses display contest was held accompanied by many special events.

A Centennial song entitled 'Sing a Song Centennial' was written by Deanne Larson and Helen Phillippi and a Centennial poem, 'From Sod to Solar', was written by Noella LaPalme.



Chamber has long, proud history

The Chamber of Commerce has a long, proud history of commitment and action to Swift Current's growth.

Beginning as the Board of Trade 81 years ago, the efforts of this business-oriented, promotion and support group has been extensive. From the beginning the Board of Trade enthusiastically supported the rural way of life in Saskatchewan helping to bring thousands of settlers to this community.

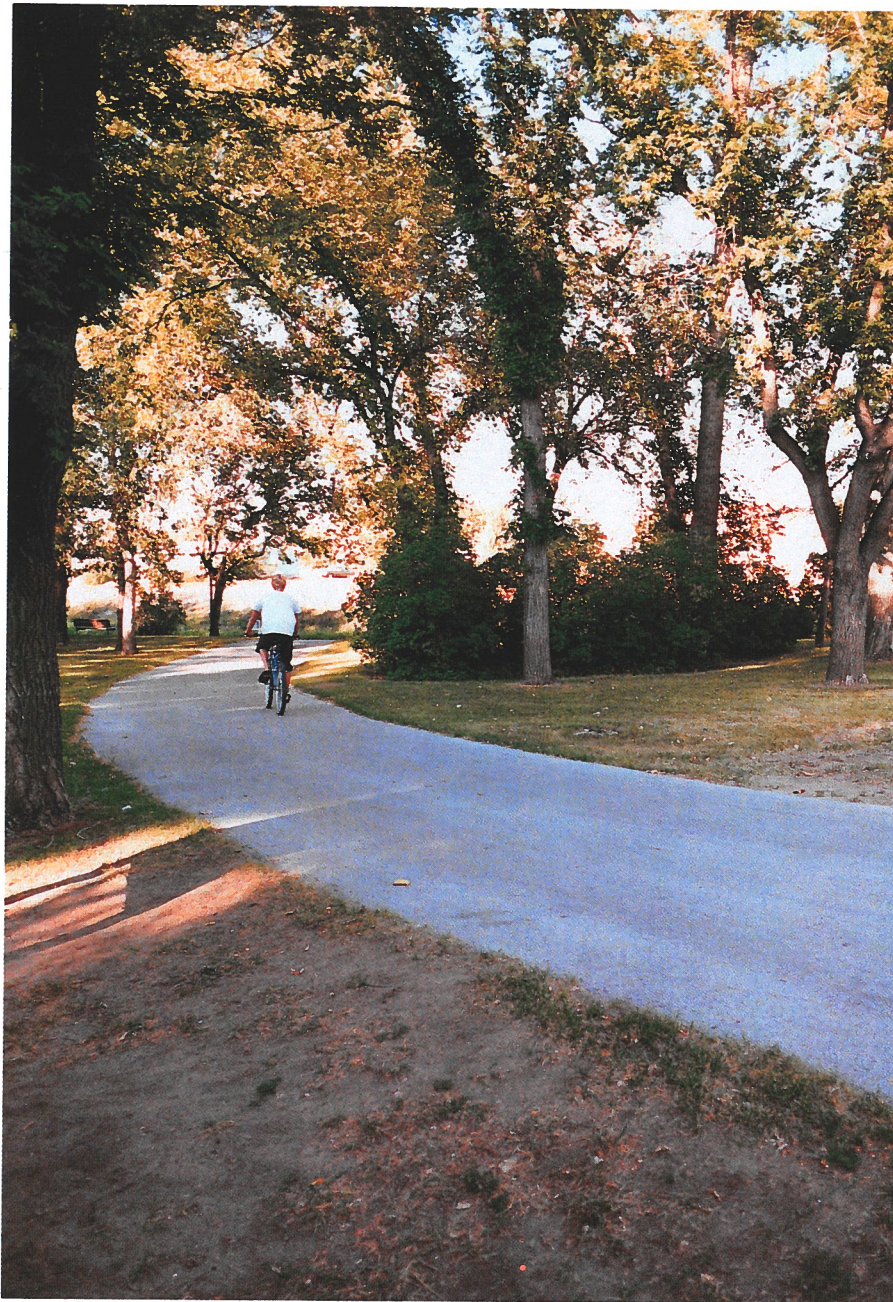
Through the years this group has thrown its support, and energies, behind every aspect of community life.

The Board of Trade was particularly

involved during Swift Current's boom years, 1909-1914. In 1949, the Board of Trade dissolved and with the amalgamation of the Retail Merchants Association, the Chamber of Commerce was formed, its first meeting on February 4.

Members of that board were F.J. Dickson, C.W. Bradbrooke, B. Gallant, H. Shaw, L. McKenzie, A.J. Falkerson, E. Atkinson, A. Wigmore, D. Mitchell and W. Collinge.

In 1988, the Chamber celebrated its 80th Anniversary in Swift Current with a number of special functions.



SWIFT CURRENT IS GRACED BY MANY BEAUTIFUL PARKS



ELMWOOD'S POPULAR AND TOUGH 18-HOLE GOLF COURSE

Dynamic sports history here

Swift Current is an oasis of sport and recreational activity, and history. Once the settlement was firmly established, citizens developed many sports programs, raising money where needed, setting aside land and generating support.

In 1910, for example, Fenton's Farm in the southeast corner was purchased, setting the stage for decades of sport and recreational activity. In capsule form, the rest of the history unfolds.

HOCKEY SQUADS -- Swift Current's hockey history is not only colorful, but tremendously exciting, including the dominating Indians, who ruled the ice from the 20s to 40s, and the sensational current Bronco squad.

The town had obtained a hockey franchise in 1911-1913 years, said to be filled with pro imports, competing against two teams from Regina, two from Moose Jaw and one Weyburn squad. Between then and the early 20s, when the Indians began their team, and played in the new Citizens Rink, a big shed with an ice surface, at 1st N.E. and Herbert, the hockey scene was fairly quiet.

Then came the Indians who, in a few short years, again with imports, would begin to dominate the Intermediate hockey scene in Western Canada. From 1928-46, the team won 11 Southern Saskatchewan titles, five provincial titles and two Western Canada titles. Many Indian team imports, like Harry Barrett, Steve Buzinsky, Cal Pascoe, Len Corrigan, Cy Cowan, Ray Gates, Bill Pates and Stan Kjasgaard, stayed on in Swift Current and married. Locals who made hockey fame included the Grinder

brothers, Borthwick, Bozak, Sykes, McNeillie, the Days, and the Knifpel brothers. Buzinsky played with the Chicago Black Hawks, Lloyd Ailsby and Walt Hamilton, the New York Rangers.

The Intermediate Indians treated local fans to good hockey through the 50s

and 60s, but with fewer imports in the league, a low point was reached and in the late 1960s, the team folded. About the same time, the new Tier 1 and 2 structure was taking shape as was a new hockey home, the Civic Centre. Back in 1934, Swift Current also had a



1914 BASKETBALL team: top row, Olive Sykes, Lula Eman, Violet Cutting, Doris Stewart, Nina Wallace, Professor Nelson

Latour; bottom row, Mildred Grinder, Dorothy Powell, Nina Grinder, Grace Thody.

juvenile squad open up who would win the Juvenile B title in 53-54. The later Legionaires would also provide local fans top entertainment and prizes.

The Swift Current Broncos set the new stage in the 60s, in 1968 the Broncos were bought out by 125 local investors and the squads of the early 70s sending several players to the NHL.

Disappointment ruled when the team pulled stakes and moved to Lethbridge. But, the return of the Broncos in 1986 was warmly received and culminated years of effort towards a WHL franchise. The new squad drew top billing and full attendance in Swift Current with

exciting juniors filling the ranks and top NHL prospects entertaining at each game. Two of its players, Joe Sakic and Sheldon Kennedy, played in the World Junior Championships in 1988, bringing home gold medals.

Their team was struck by tragedy in 1986 (see Disasters), but streaked forward in '87 and came on in the 1988-89 season to reach out and grab first place (at time of writing).

ICE RINKS -- The Citizens Rink wasn't the first covered ice surface, that ranking going to a building at 5th N.E. and Cheadle. Its roof collapsed. Citizens Rink was considered a great

place in its time, often packed for games and was used widely for minor hockey right up to its doom in 1976 when proclaimed structurally unsound. It was demolished in 1977.

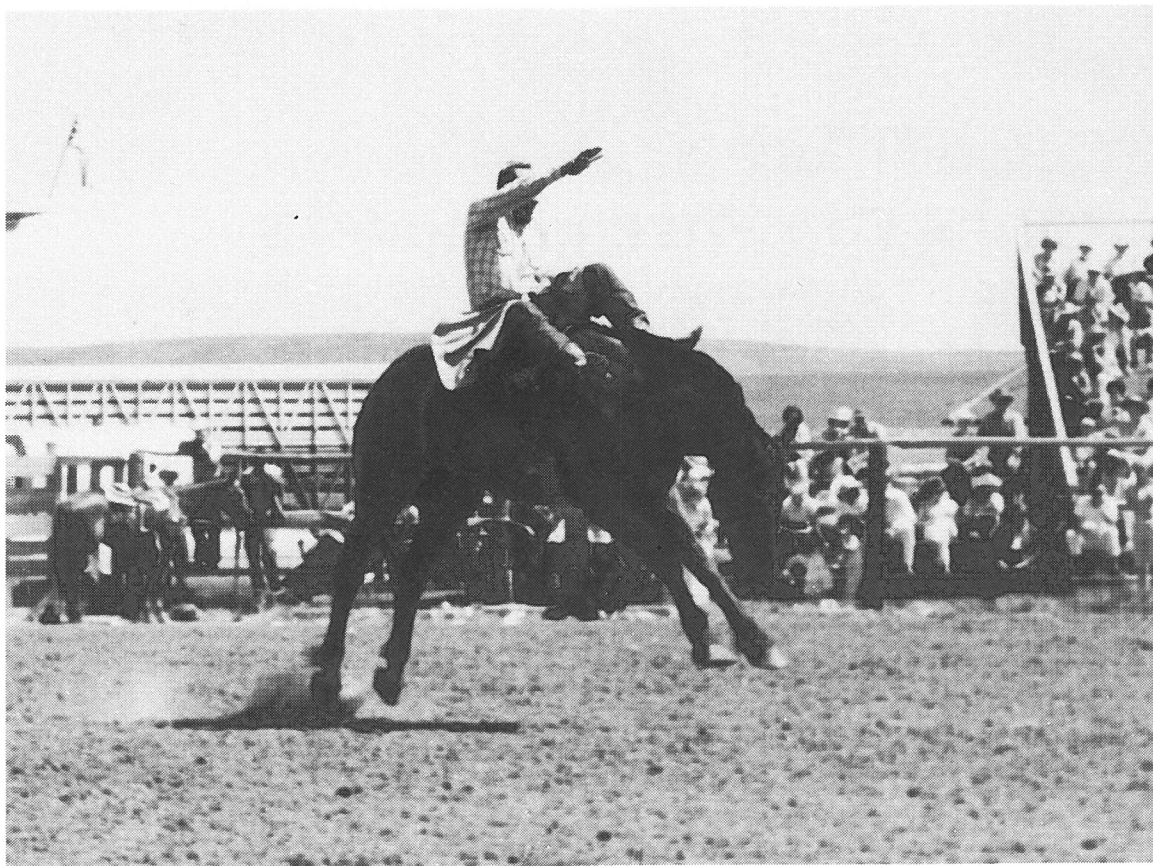
Little time was wasted in providing a replacement. That April, 1977, the new Fairview rink was approved.

The big prize came in the sixties when the Civic Centre came on the scene. It had been proposed in 1950, nixed twice, but revived and became an ongoing proposal. The Jubilee association revived it again in the 1960s and in 1964 a model was unveiled, a contract let in 1965, the sod turned that year by Mayor J.D. Keene, a Centennial grant obtained in 1966 with the official opening January 23, 1967.

BALL TEAMS -- Still a major backstop of Swift Current's sports agenda, the Indians Ball Club has pleased fans for decades. Like the early hockey teams, the town was behind them, worked for, and supported them. In the early days, regular and semi-pro teams (again because of pros from south of the border) played on the bald prairies, later a ball park was established at Ashley Park, eventually leading to Mitchell Field, where Trail Campground is now located, named after supporter Duncan Mitchell, a local baker.

The club folded once, but made a strong comeback and moved to the present Ford Field. Some players, who received only room and board in early years, made it to the big leagues. For trivia buffs, the first ball game under lights was played in July, 1956.

CURLING RINKS -- Curling has been a monumental sport through the years. One of the first rinks opened here at the bend of the Creek, south of the hospital and later there was one across from





The Broncos: City's Top Prize in the 80's





SOAP BOX

REACHING speeds of over 30 KM/H, soap box racers speed down Central Avenue each June. The biggest race in Canada, the event is now in its 7th year and draws hundreds of spectators to the track.



RODEO:

THE LABATT'S Pro-Rodeo in May and the Frontier Days Rodeo each July 1-3, provides some of the finest rodeo action in Western Canada. The Pro-Rodeo is part of the circuit leading to the Calgary Stampede.

Citizens Rink. Annual bonspiels, as they are now, were very popular in early days, people arriving by train and many staying the whole week. Years later, the sod was turned for the new building at the exhibition grounds and in 1961 the Stockade opened.

SPORTS CRAZY -- Through the years the city established many outdoor facilities from skating rinks to ball fields, horseshoe pits to tennis courts. Almost every conceivable sport has been, or is now, played in the city, or nearby. When opportunities were available, existing structures were captured for the sports minded such as the Armory, bought by the city in 1968 and becoming the Recreation Centre. During the 50s many of the ball diamonds, tennis courts and such were brought on stream. Minor baseball and hockey teams have flourished through

the decades.

Soap Box racing, held first in the late 40s, made a startling comeback in 1983, now in its seventh year.

Swim competitions, and swimming for fun, have played a role in sports history. The Fairview Pool opened in June 1974. In 1978 voters approved an indoor pool and by late 1981 the Aquatic Centre was completed and opened, adjacent to the Comprehensive High School. The 2nd Ave. N.W. outdoor pool, or Rotary Pool, was opened in 1957 and remained the site for hundreds of competitions until recent years. Old age finally caught up with this pool and it will soon be demolished.

GOLF -- Elmwood Golf Course, dating back to 1921, was not Swift Current's first course, that honor going to a short-lived inspiration, with sand greens, on the South Side. But, Elmwood was the

one to take hold, its first clubhouse, or better put, shack, opened in 1925.

Elmwood was so popular in early days touring pros even stopped by to test the course. It would become one of the finest in the province, with its natural setting, fine greens and challenging fairways, treating thousands of golfers to tough competition over the years.

'MR. RECREATION'

Although there were literally hundreds of community boosters of sports and recreation endeavors in Swift Current, one man deserves some notation. Bill Ford, who still lives in the city, has been called "Mr. Recreation" for his achievements, both as a volunteer and with the city's recreation department from 1937-70. He has a long list of volunteer deeds to his credit. Ford Field was named after Bill.



ONE OF THE CITY'S MANY BALL DIAMONDS



SUPERVISED swimming once a great pastime at the creek.



THE CIVIC CENTRE



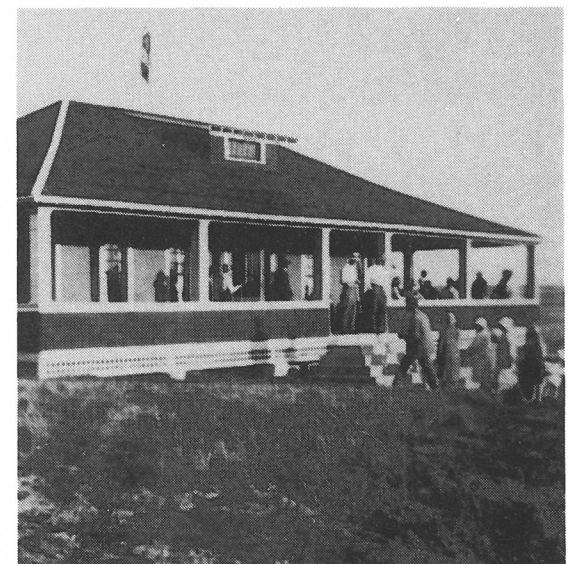
THE BEAUTIFUL AQUATIC CENTRE



SOUTH SIDE'S FAIRVIEW ARENA



J. KRUSE, J. Cutting and C. Steele after a round of golf at Elmwood. Date of photo is unknown. At upper left would be the clubhouse, that photo shown below.



THE GRAND opening of Elmwood's then new clubhouse drew many of visitors in 1923 or 25.





Frontier Days thrills . . .

The second half of a century of community spirit lies ahead for Swift Current's annual fair, Frontier Days.

Fifty years of celebration was highlighted in 1988, and in 1989, the fair is a focal point of the city's 75th Anniversary festivities.

Hundreds of thousands of people have gone through the gates at Frontier Days since its inception in 1938, the brain wave of the Kinetic Club, a group of young men full of ideas and the desire to carry them through. The Depression and dust bowl years had dragged down both the economy and spirit of the area and it was obvious Swift Current needed something to cheer about. That's exactly what it got.

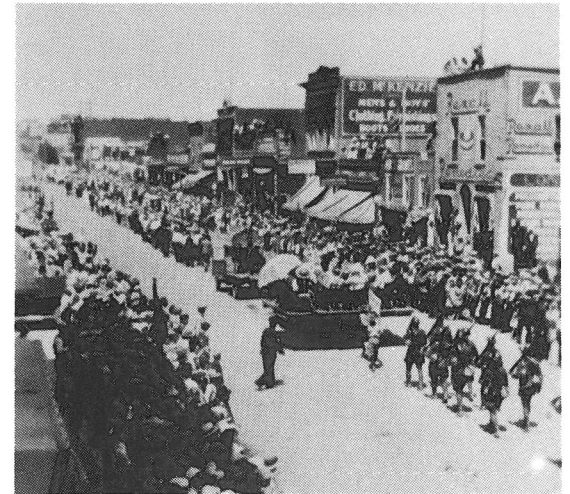
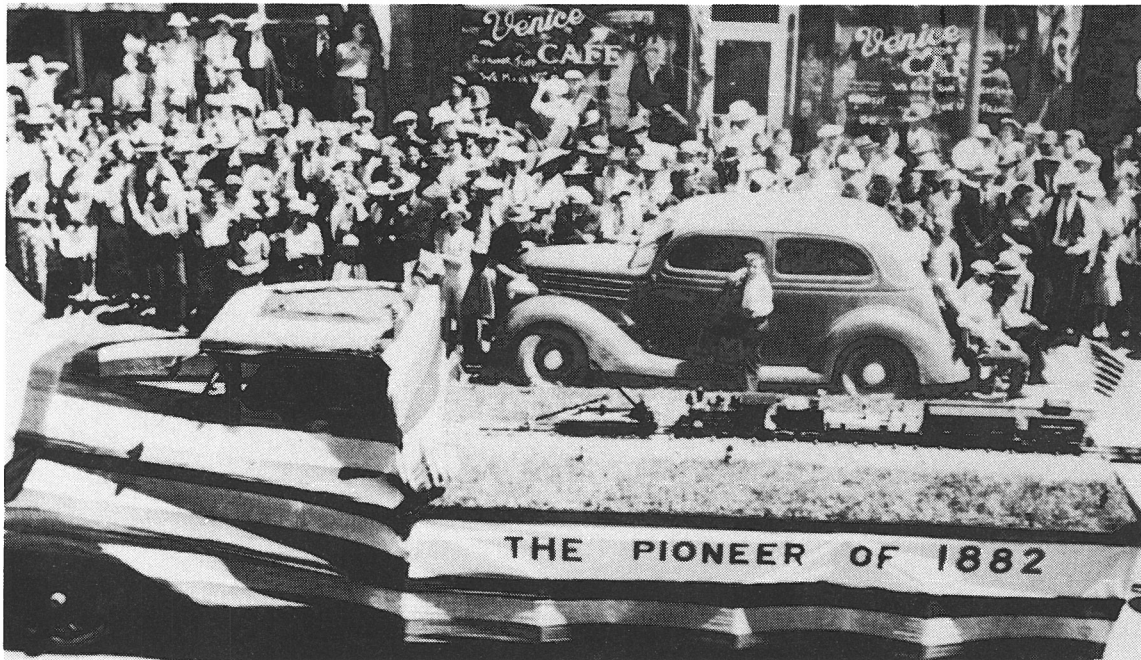
What started in 1938 with the 'bearded city' celebration caught everyone's attention, sparking an annual event that remains a mainstay to the city's calendar.

The founding Kinetic Club dispersed in 1950, but their objectives were carried on, first by a Board of Governors of George Roth, Irving Hansen, Ernie Dodds, Mike Neuhalfen and Grant Denike, then a board of nine members with Hansen as chairman in 1954. In that year the Swift Current Agricultural and Exhibition Association incorporated and the fair grounds got a new building, the Stockade, to boot.

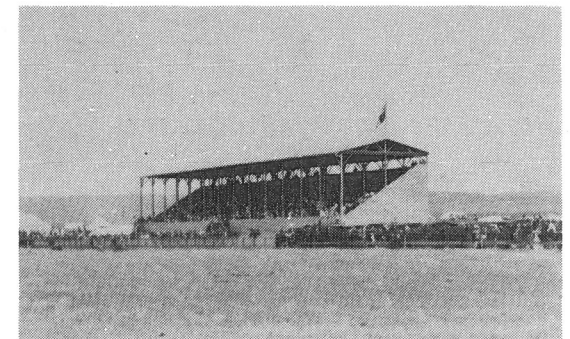
Distinctly a western mode, the fair has brought fun, entertainment, and special

guests to the community and presented Swift Current as one of the rodeo capitals in North America.

With new ideas, and energy, the future awaits 50 more years of Frontier Days fun.



PARADE thrills have been high on July 1st since Frontier Days began, the top and left photos depicting fun in the first parade of 1938. Below is the grandstand, 1912, where a fine dirt track drew crowds from far and wide.



Churches here early in history

Swift Current has often been called the 'City of Churches', a name appropriate to its history. The influence of the church, with its social and community participation, has played an integral role in the city's spirit of growth.

Even before the Riel Rebellion, the settlement but two years old, a Presbyterian church official came here. In April 1885, an Anglican Church service was conducted for the troops and travelling priests and missionaries had toured the area.

Before the end of the century, church life was very much a part of Swift Current. The following is a record of these churches as listed from submissions to this history book.

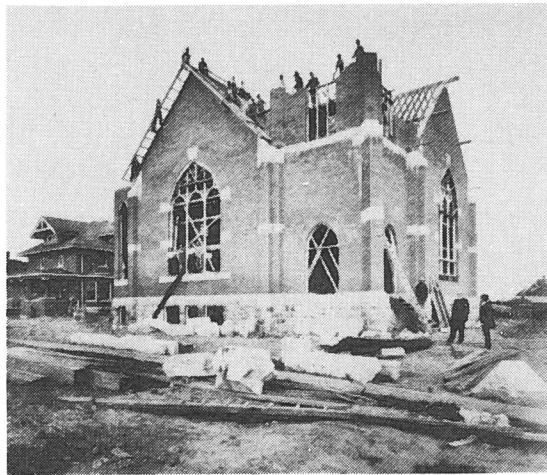
Presbyterians originally founded, in 1886, a church built and dedicated in 1889. The eventual St. Andrew's congregation had held services outdoors, in homes and stores up to that point. ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN Church actually formed in 1925 when the congregation did not want to be part of the formation of the United Church. The congregation of Presbyterians had several locations prior to, and after, 1925. In 1968 the church moved to its present home on 19th Ave.

ST. STEPHEN'S The Martyr Anglican Church was founded and dedicated in April 1, 1899, a new building, its roots reaching back to services during the Riel Rebellion and a later small church building of 1889. The Anglican church was established here in 1885. That

early building formed the chancel and sanctuary of the old St. Stephen's building. The present church property was purchased and dedicated in 1953 and the building at 108 2nd Ave. N.E., begun with the present Rectory purchased in 1969.

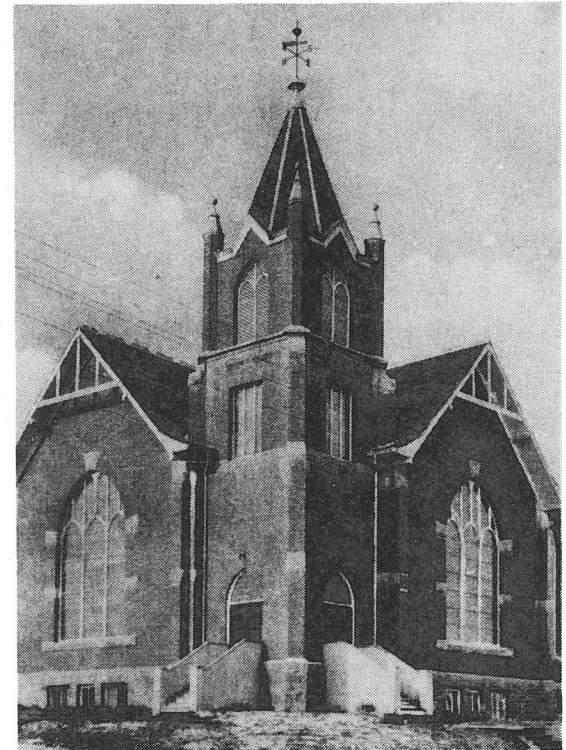
These two churches had received land grants of 40 acres from the government on the east side at the bend of the creek, basically encompassing an area from 7th to 11th N.E.; St. Stephen's got the land north of Sydney, St. Andrew's south of Sydney.

FIRST UNITED Church was originally



IN 1912 the Knox Presbyterian Church was under construction and completed; in 1925 the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregation churches formed into the United Church of Canada and this church became First United Church.

the Knox Presbyterian which built its Church in July 1899 and the present sanctuary built in 1912, dedicated in 1913, with 120 families in the congregation. The Metropolitan Methodist Church was dedicated in June, 1913. With the union of Presbyterian, Methodist (services began here about 1893) and Congregation churches in 1925, the United Church of Canada was born and this church became Knox United and Metropolitan Methodist became Metropolitan United, both functioning independently until





A LIGHT ON THE PRAIRIES



SACRED HEART: ONE OF MANY BEAUTIFUL CHURCHES HERE

Churches. . .

1942 when amalgamating to the Swift Current United Church. Separate buildings continued, but the Metropolitan burned in 1946. Its Christian Education Centre was added in 1961 and in 1986, the Manse and Annex were removed, Metropolitan Place built joining the Sanctuary and education centre.

The founding meeting for GRACE UNITED Church was held September 28, 1958 to serve southside United Church parishoners, a building purchased at 405 4th S.E. with its dedication being October 26 that year. A manse was dedicated on February 20, 1963.

ST. OLAF LUTHERAN CHURCH was founded in 1908, its congregation, which grew much quicker years later, meeting in hospitals. In 1941 the first church building was bought on Sidney St. and 2nd Ave. N.W. and in 1954 groundbreaking for its present church, at 665 Central North took place. The first services was held February 6, 1955



**Knox Presbyterian Church
Designated Heritage Site 1985**

with its dedication being held June 25, 1961.

SACRED HEART Roman Catholic Church was founded in 1912 on North Railway, changing in later years to 41 2nd Ave. N.E. by the overpass. Catholic priests visited this area in the 1880s, the first baptism taking place in 1884. by Father Larche. In 1906 a Chapel was built on the North Railway site, the church built in 1912, the St. Joan of Arc Academy opened in 1926, the parish hall built in 1940 and the rectory in 1950. A new church was constructed in 1955. The Sacred Heart Catholic Women's League was formed here in 1950. In 1966 Sacred Heart Parish divided into another parish, with ST. MICHAEL's Church formed.

The SALVATION ARMY Citadel came to Swift Current one year before incorporation, in 1913, locating at Cheadle and 3rd N.E., turning the sod at its present location on 4th N.W. in 1959.

During its first 30 years the Salvation Army was known for its street meetings and open air services on Saturday evenings with a small brass band.

During the last 40 years, and more, the Army has had Thrift Stores and a mission ministry of food, shelter, transportation and clothing.

During 1913-14 the Holiness Movement Church was founded comprising a small congregation. Baptist services were conducted during 1911-13 in the school house on Cheadle St. E. and other places, a small church built at 1st N.W. and Sidney in 1914, a few years later that building purchased and moved by the non-concurring Presbyterians.

In 1940, a new church was formed, growing out of prayer meetings and bible studies. THE CHURCH OF THE OPEN BIBLE was founded that year, its

first building next to the airmen's centre during World War II. The church is now located on 19th Ave. N.E. and joined the Associated Gospel Churches in 1948.

The KINGDOM HALL OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES built the local hall in 1958-59 at 9th N.W. and Lorne St. In 1949 the congregation of about 35 had their services in the Eagles Hall followed by meeting in the Levine Block at 1st N.E. and Cheadle until moving to their present location. Different congregation members have done missionary work world-wide.

In 1956, EASTSIDE CHURCH OF GOD was founded on 9th Ave. N.W., (called the Westmount Church of God) and moving later to its present location on Winnie Street. The church is an annex of the Hallonquist Church of God. The first parsonage was bought in 1960. The church was first purchased in 1976 and the mortgage burned in 1978.

TRAILVIEW ALLIANCE Church on Battleford Trail began at another location, first as the Swift Current Alliance Church in 1957 with cottage prayer meetings in Central School, then



Methodist Church is built.

the Cheadle and 4th Avenue Church in 1962. On March 30, 1980, the present facility, called Trailview Alliance, was officially dedicated.

ZION MENNONITE Church was founded in 1959 at 47 5th N.E., moving later to its present location at 78 6th Ave. N.E. In early years, Zion was one of eight churches under the umbrella of the Emmaus Church at Wymark. In 1959, Zion became independent and hired its first pastor. Its emphasis is on missions and missionary work and support of the Mennonite Central Committee and its overseas relief work.

EVANGELICAL MENNONITE formed in January, 1962 on Walker Street, a protestant denomination of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference. On January 22, 1972 the church became an organized local church; on October 14, 1977 a mortgage-burning ceremony was held.

It had been in 1958 that a revival swept through the Mennonite communities south of Swift Current and many who experienced spiritual renewal joined the newly Organized Evangelical Mennonite Church near Wymark. The conference Board of Missions started here, and services began in a community hall on the south side under the direction of Rev. Cornie Plett.

THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD Pentecostal Church began in November, 1977, its meetings held in the Elks Hall, building on its present location later on Chaplin St. E. in 1972.

In March, 1979 the PRAIRIE BAPTIST Church was founded on 4th S.E. and Dahl Streets. Parishioners met in the pastors home for the first few months, then moved to the Southside Recreation Centre before going to its present site.

Other churches listed in Swift Current,

but history notes not submitted, are the Holiness Movement Mission, Full Gospel Church, Bridgeway Community Church, Church of Christ, Full Gospel Apostolic

Church, Islamic Centre of Swift Current, Greek Orthodox Church, Calvary Lutheran Church, Seventh Day Adventist Church, Triumph Lutheran Church.

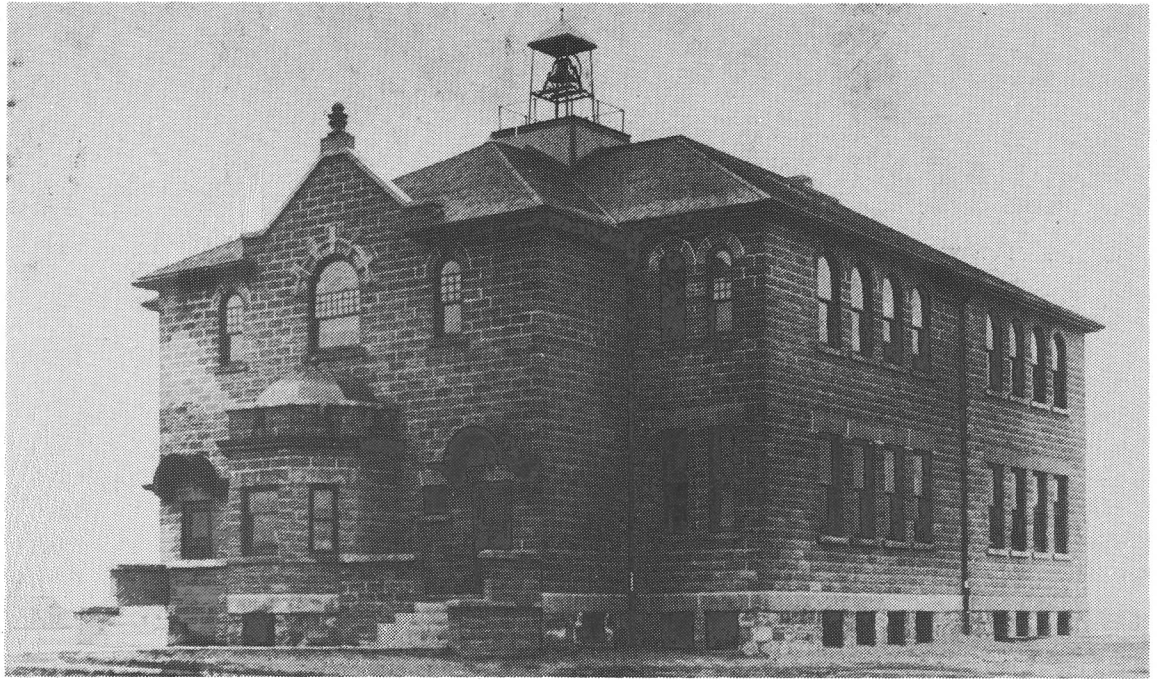


UKRAINIAN Catholic Church on Southside.



City Hall offices and Council Chambers

Great days in school



FIRST large school in Swift Current.



CENTRAL SCHOOL

Built in 1914

Designated a heritage site in 1985.



EARLY days class posed for the camera.

Hallowed halls of education

The story of education in this community is an enormous one.

Two education facilities share the city's 75th Anniversary in 1989, Central School and the Elmwood administration building, then Elmwood School, both built in 1914.

Yet, it all began before that. A short stroll through that building history presents an exciting picture.

In 1884 a Territorial School law passed to organize school districts and by 1900 a one-room school, converted from a rail box car, was operating with a cottage-type school placed at the

present site of Beatty Collegiate about 1904.

Those grounds would house the first real school, in 1906 or 07, the old Beatty, just a cement block building with four classrooms, an extra classroom building added to meet demand. The tender called for a two story veneered school 35 by 58 with a stone basement. It was originally called the Anderson School. In those day, oldtimers recall, boys and girls had separate playgrounds and never met during the school day except in class. It was gutted by fire in 1925 and re-

opened in 1929, renamed W.A. Beatty in 1963. She was torn down in the 1970s.

In 1913 Oman school, with two rooms, opened followed by Central and Elmwood. The cement block school would serve for a time as City Hall when those cottage schools were added to Oman and Elmwood. Decades later, Elmwood would cease as a school, be remodelled and serve as administration offices for the schools. The High School was housed for years at Central, then became overcrowded and the cement block building was remodelled to serve again, this time as the Swift Current Collegiate Institute, a wing added in 1944, now Beatty Collegiate.

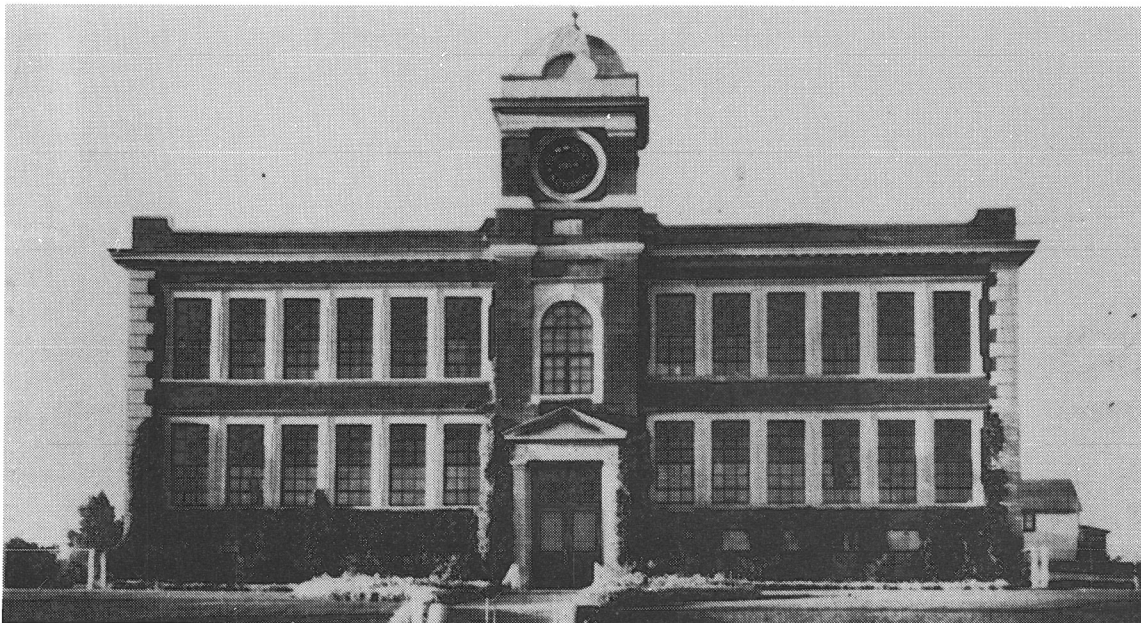
In 1948 a technical school was built beside the collegiate, then joined to it. A plebiscite was called for this approval, the vote in favor 353, those opposed 46. The Ashley Park four-room school was built in '47 with a major addition in '54. That year, too, Dickson School was established. O.M. Irwin School opened in 1963 at a cost of \$1 million. Fairview School was approved in 1966.

Back in 1926, a Roman Catholic School District was formed called St. Patrick's Separate School, for both public and high school work.

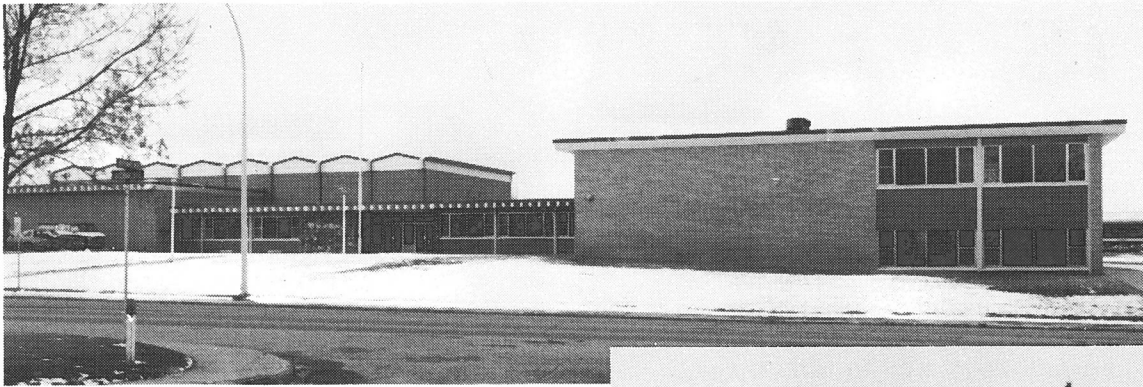
A great moment came for the community in 1969 when the Comprehensive High School opened.

Thousands of students have received an education through these schools, given by hundreds of dedicated teachers and administrators.

Today's educational system is aided by the Cypress Hills Regional College which includes in its offerings, university courses through networks with fine institutions. Education television also adds greatly with networks again to higher levels.

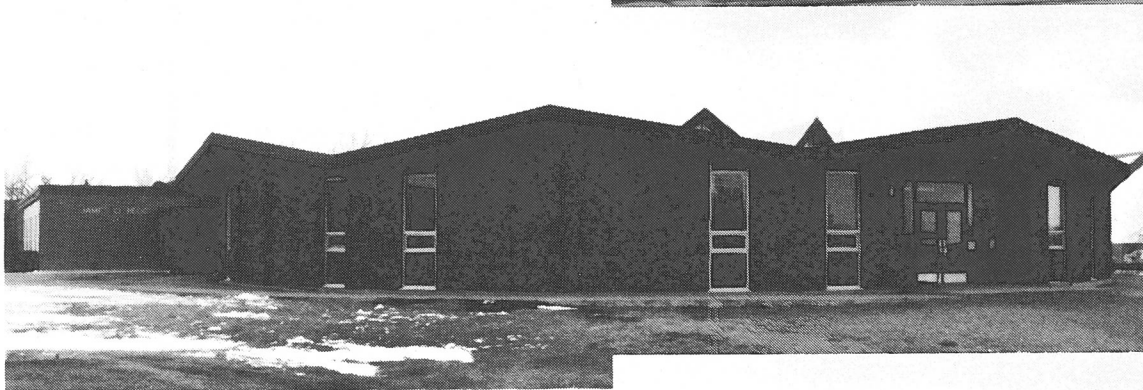


ELMWOOD School before dome removed.



O.M. Irwin Collegiate

*St. Joseph's
Separate School*



James O. Begg

*Comprehensive
High School*



Their aim is to serve people

Clubs and Organizations

Swift Current has been served well by an extensive list of service and volunteer organizations, each with an aim to better the community. Some work with people, others on special projects, some on both.

We can look back at these groups through submissions to this souvenir history book.

PEOPLE AND HEALTH -- Providing essential information on health areas are focused through several local organizations.

The Red Cross Society, formed here in 1915 with Mrs. H.E. Clinite as president, provides emergency relief, holds blood donor clinics, safe swim classes, loan services assists seniors. Providing first aid training and application since the early 30's has been the role of the St. John Ambulance group. Cancer research, public education and service to cancer patients was greatly boosted in Swift Current in 1948 when the Canadian Cancer Society formed a Unit here.

Providing a place where mentally handicapped shut-ins and seniors can enjoy sociable time is the purpose behind the Alfred Cooper Club, formed

in 1978. The city chapter of the Saskatchewan Heart Foundation conducted its first campaign in 1980. It is a group dedicated to arresting Canada's No. 1 killer, heart disease.

The Alzheimer's and Related Diseases Assoc. of Swift Current, established in 1982, provides support and special programs to caregivers and families of victims. Gathering research funds, providing patient services and promoting organ donation is the prime function of the Swift Current and District Kidney Foundation Chapter. Big Sisters and Big Brothers operate in Swift Current, providing one-to-one relationships for girls and boys.

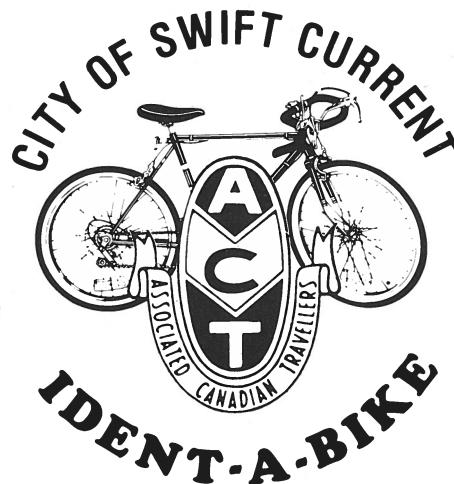
SERVICE CLUBS -- The Kiwanis Club dates back to 1921 in Swift Current, its goal to provide altruistic service to individuals, groups and community

needs which otherwise would not be funded. Kiwanis support the Fun Olympics at Palliser Hospital, 4-H projects and boys and girls groups.

The Kiwanis Club of Prairie Pioneers, chartered in 1979, provides manpower for Kiwanis projects and presents scrolls to new citizens, among other things.

Supplying playground equipment, sponsoring hockey, designating bursaries, providing 'talking books' for the CNIB library and hosting the annual July 1st Frontier Days Parade are the ongoing goals of Lions in Swift Current, formed here in 1947.

The Associated Canadian Travellers were chartered here in 1948. Their objective is to work for the community and provide fellowship among travellers. The ACT has donated thousands of dollars in equipment to the Union



Hospital.

Well known as the sponsors of Saskatchewan's annual Telemiracle fund-raising drive, Kinsmen in Saskatchewan are involved in many projects to communities. The local Kinsmen formed in 1954, sponsor the annual Pee Wee Hockey Tournament, donate playground equipment and conducted the successful Operation Kid Program.

Supporting the Kinsmen are the Kinettes, chartered in 1955. The Kinettes host the September birthday party at the Palliser, host an evening of shopping for seniors at Christmas and are co-ordinators of the Block Parent Program. K-ette and K-40 are support groups to Kinettes and Kinsmen.

The Lions, too, have support in the form of the Swift Current Lioness Club,

started here in 1976, but their original charter of the Lions Ladies was formed in 1947. Their projects include diabetes, the CNIB and youth.

FRATERNAL GROUPS -- Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, Swift Current Lodge 26, began here in 1906 with concordant branches such as Shriners, Order of the Eastern Star, Arch Masons and the Scottish Rite Masons. The Shrine Ladies Auxiliary was chartered here in 1930 and are part of the Wa Wa Temple Ladies Auxiliary. They assist the Shriners' Hospital for crippled and burned children and with local projects for such children.

The Fraternal Order of Eagles started here in 1908 and promote local pride in the community, major charities, the Art Ehrmann Cancer Fund and the May Baer Heart Fund.

In 1923 the Swift Current Benevolent and Protective Order of Elk's, Lodge No. 8 began. The group supports deaf detection through the Purple Cross Fund, youth in sports, senior citizen homes locally and provincially, and the provincial wing of the hospital in Saskatoon.

With their motto 'Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism' the Knights of Columbus in Swift Current have hosted 1987 Special Olympic Provincial Games and brought the Flying Fathers hockey team here to raise funds for playgrounds. The Knights formed on March 23, 1947.

AND STILL MORE -- Girl Guides and the Scout Movement have been in Swift Current for many years, providing an atmosphere for young people to become responsible citizens.

The Ashley Park Community Association built the Ashley Park Hall through volunteer labor in 1952. The Ashley Park Ladies Auxiliary have volunteered their time to maintain the building since the late 1950s.

The Oil Wives of Swift Current, formed in 1959, help with Meals on Wheels and the Blood Donor Clinics.

The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship formed in 1978. This is a laymens group, made up of men from all walks of life and churches.

Making donations to charities, providing lap robes to the Palliser Hospital and helping the blind are goals of the Telephone Pioneers of America Swift Current, formed in 1983.

(Readers will find special mention of the Agricultural and Exhibition Association, Legion Branch, Legion Ladies Auxiliary, Allied Arts Council, Old Time Fiddlers, and the Hospital Ladies' Auxiliary in other portions of this book.)

Canadian Cancer Society



Allied Arts

Much of today's cultural fine points in Swift Current can be credited to the Allied Arts Council, celebrating their 20th anniversary in 1989.

Their mandate -- to promote all aspects of arts and culture for the benefit of the community and take an active lead in literary, performing and visual arts. To that end, their success has been well documented. The Council highlights, among other achievements, the Stars for Saskatchewan and Konkert for Kids performance series.

Early in its tenure, the group operated, on a voluntary basis, a gallery for four years at the Recreation Centre, featuring new exhibits monthly. This effort was instrumental in obtaining funding for the National Exhibition Centre, part of the R.C. Dahl Centre, featuring international, national, regional and local exhibits.

Internationally renowned individuals and companies have graced the stage here thanks to the council, who have also brought many writers and artists-in-residence to work in the community. In return, the satisfaction of giving Swift Current culture and entertainment quality of high standard.

Fiddlers

In the span of a decade the Swift Current Old Time Fiddlers have made an impression on the fiddle music world.

And, during that same period the Fiddlers have raised over \$125,000 for local causes and pressed nine records.

The Fiddlers, a non-profit group, was formed in 1979 to preserve and promote

old time music and dancing. The 34 member group, 22 of which are musicians, perform at various functions including monthly sessions at the Civic Centre.

The electric doors at the Union Hospital, donated by the group, highlight a long list of donations made through the years to local and area institutions or organizations. Most of the funds are raised through the sale of records, well received throughout Canada and the United States.

They pay themselves -- nothing.

Fiddle Contest

Still going strong, the Swift Current Old Time Fiddlers Contest is entering its 23rd season in 1989.

That's its 23rd season since its revival in 1966. During the 30s and 40s similar contests were held, then broadcast on CJRM Regina to Swift Current and area audiences.

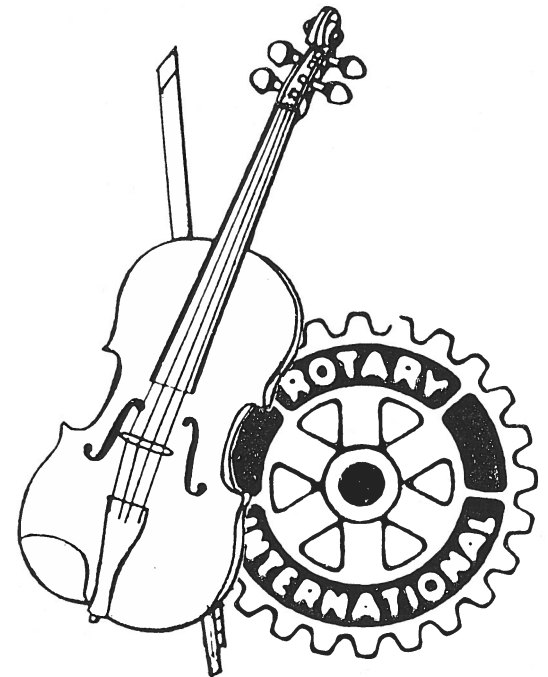
The contest as we know it now was revived in 1966 by Ivy Horner, Bob Steinborn, Hoffman Powley and Sid Woodward, joined by Shirley Hutchinson and Harold Newlover, then Lawrence Schatkoski, Elmer Miller and Jim McIntyre.

The revival set its stage at CJFB-TV, the first contest being aired October 8, with sponsorship supplied by Ivy's Auto Accessories, Miller Brothers and McIntyre Manufacturing.

Two years later the contest moved to the Legion Hall and expanded to a two-night show bringing an expanded committee which included George Imrie, Vance Hanline, Adam Schick, Harvey Peacock, Charles Schofield and Lloyd Smith.

Fiddlers from across the west and U.S. points come to Swift Current each year to compete in this respected event. The contest was taken over by the Rotary Club a few years ago.

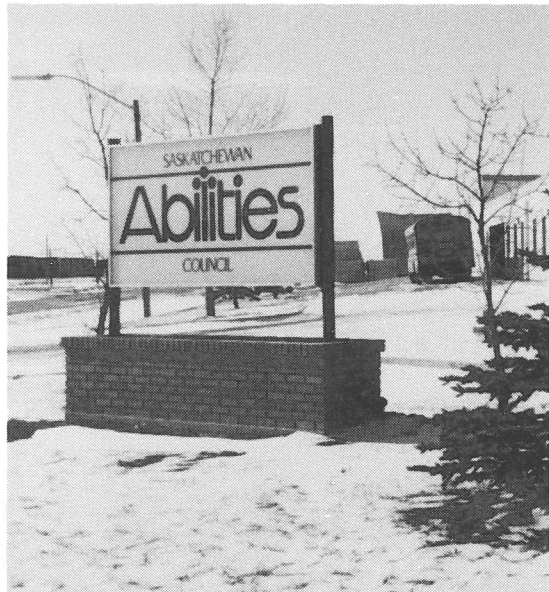
OLDE TYME FIDDLING CHAMPIONSHIP



Some of City's Many Industries



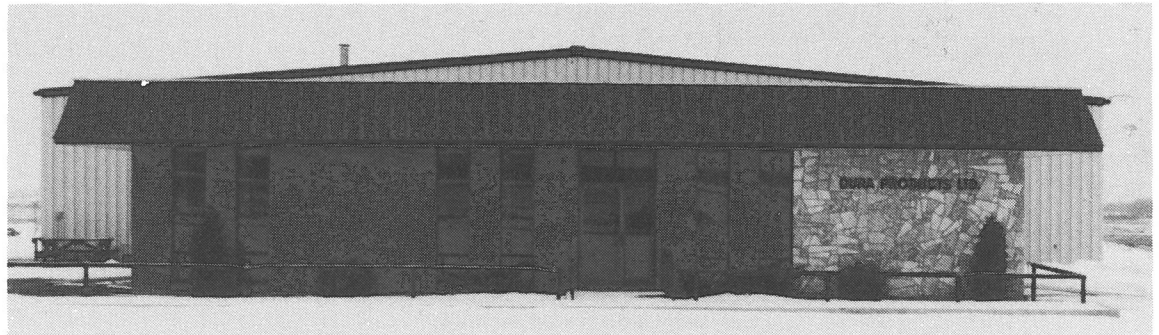
MOBIL OIL



SOUTHWEST ABILITY CENTRE



GRAIN ELEVATORS



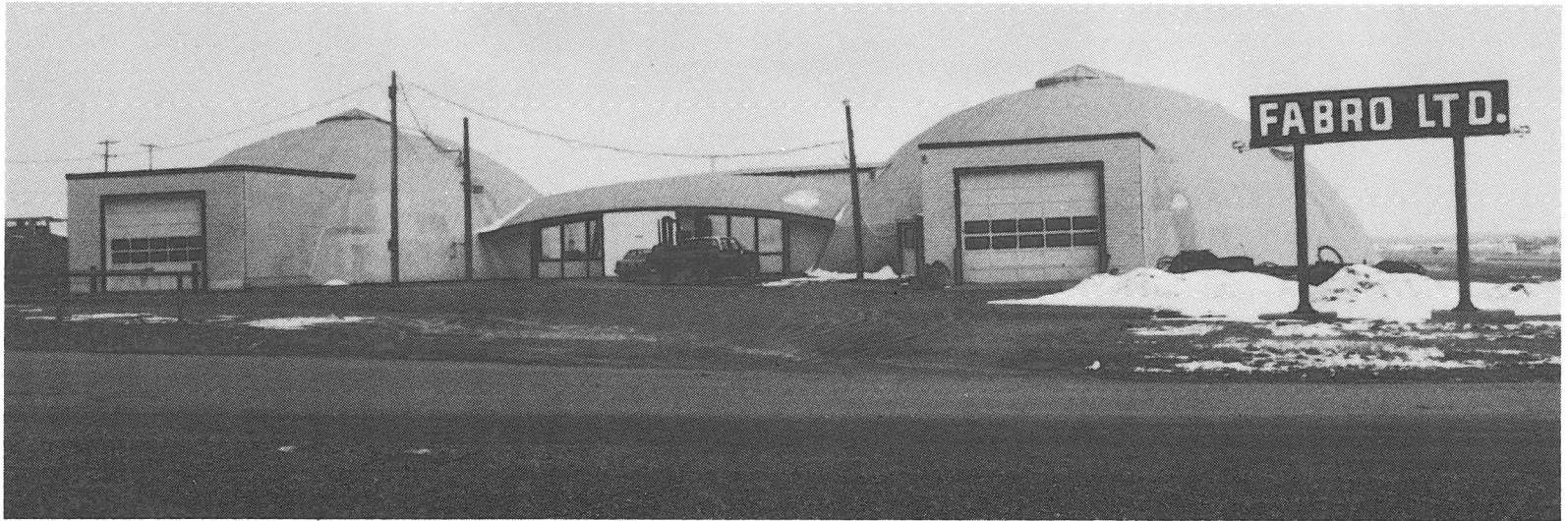
DURA PRODUCTS



REM MANUFACTURING



Spar Group



Fabro Ltd.



18th Reunion 209th Battalion - 1934

WAR YEARS

A glimpse at those exciting, important years in our city

Two days after Great Britain declared war on Germany, and World War II emerged, a recruiting office opened in Swift Current.

First to enlist was Frank Reynolds, a World War I vet, and the first woman to volunteer, as a nurse, was Alice Howard. She had served in WW I at a hospital in Bradford, Yorkshire. Those who generally lined up first were the unemployed, so many of them from the depression.

Parades and speeches often bade them farewell.

These were the war years. Entire books are required to tell the whole story. This is but a glimpse of local highlights.

UNITS FORMED -- Some fine military units formed were formed here. In the first great war Swift Current was headquarters of the 14th Light Horse Regiment, Lt.Col. W.O. Smythe C.O. of the local company. This Company quickly joined the Regiment and were sent overseas, although Smythe could not go, being a local judge. Local recruiting for the 9th Canadian Mounted

Rifles began in 1914. Smythe took charge of recruiting for the 128th (Infantry) Battalion in 1915 and then he recruited the 209th Infantry Battalion in 1916, later sent overseas, 120 of them landing in France in 1917, Smythe among them. Also formed were the 27th Saskatchewan Light Horse (B Squadron) in April, 1911.

One company of the Second Battalion 14th Canadian Hussars established here in 1941, recruiting immediately; part of battalion, the 8th Recce Regiment, was primarily recruited here and would land



on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day. This group would dissolve in 1968 and plan on holding a reunion here in 1989. In 1982 two members of the French Fighters of the Interior paid an historic visit here to the home headquarters of the 8th Recce.

VICTORY BONDS -- During both great wars, Swift Current's efforts in raising Victory Bond funds was staggering.

Each year during WW I the city gained its Honor Flag for reaching campaign targets, even during the flu epidemic of 1918. In WW II a Victory Loan arch, 35 feet high, erected in 1943, was on Central Ave. and great goals were again obtained.

SENT PARCELS -- People on the home front did much for the effort. For example, during the first war the International Order of the Daughters of the Empire held a series of social evenings to help the national chapter outfit a hospital ship. And, the Caledonian Society formed its 'Knitting and Sewing League for Soldiers and Sailors.'

In WW II women were asked to register for home services; the Victory Service Club sent over 100 Christmas parcels to active servicemen from here; the Red Cross made blankets.

Don't Put the Cart Before the Horse



—With acknowledgements to Swift Current and their loan slogan.

THE SWIFT Current Victory Loan drive inspired this cartoon in the Leader Post on April 29, 1944 when locals created

the slogan "Don't put the cart before the horse."

The commissioning of the H.M.C.S. Swift Current, sent into active service in 1941, received an engraved silver tray and the Quota Club sent parcels to the crew.

PRECAUTIONS -- In WW II, air raid precaution zones were established here and the reservoir and powerhouse were guarded. A trainload of Nazi prisoners passed through creating quite a stir.

TENSIONS -- At home, tensions were low until the attack on Pearl Harbor. Noteworthy was four Japanese families sent a letter pledging allegiance to Canada. Japanese families here were not included in the general internment.

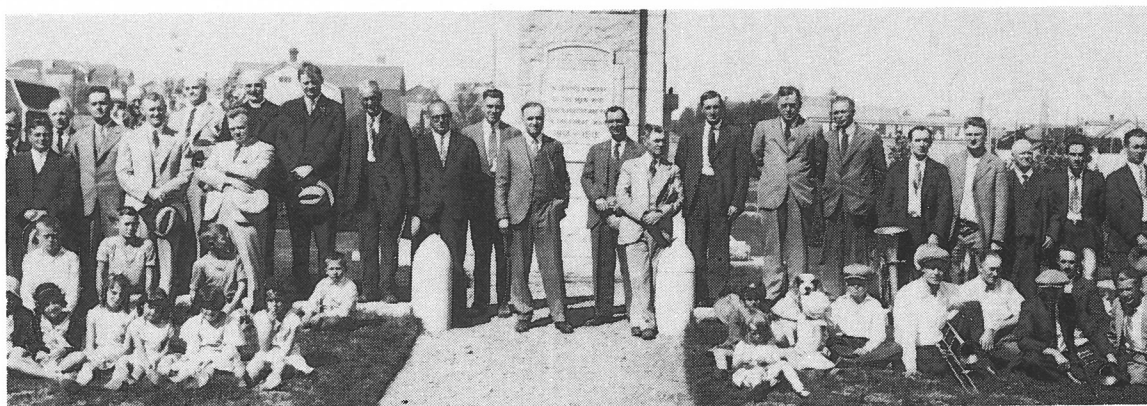
PILOT TRAINING -- A major role for Swift Current during WW II was host to the Pilot Training Centre, east of the city. The center was announced in 1940, the first trainees, 200 in all, to the No. 39 Service Flying Training School, arriving in June, 1941. The first crew graduates came out in 1942, the centre's closing announced in March 1944.

IT'S OVER -- Welcome home parties awaited returning service people concluding both wars. On November 7, 1918, with the German surrender announced, stores began closing and decorated cars drove the streets, people waving flags. The old village bell rang, a torchlight procession formed, a bonfire built and speeches made. A dance followed in the Healy Hotel, all amongst the dreaded flu epidemic.

The first of many welcome home parties of WW II was held September 3, 1945 when nearly 300 were honored in the Elks Hall. The Central War Services Auxiliary, chaired by Mrs. Ed McKenzie, headed the project and scores of women, from various groups, served dinner.



Victory Loan Arch on Central during WWII.



Remembrance Day service in the 1920's.

The Legion . . .

Swift Current's Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 56 was formed in 1915, then the Army and Navy Veterans Association. Its right arm, the Ladies Auxiliary, came into force in 1940.

The Legion supports various organizations and charities in the city, sponsors minor hockey teams, and helps the Union Hospital and Palliser Care Centre, and other groups.

In 1917, during the First World War, the group changed its name to the Great War Veterans Association and in 1926 changed to the Canadian Legion (British Empire Service League). The Royal Canadian Legion title came about in the 1960s.

The Auxiliary assists the Legion in carrying out their programs, including the annual Poppy Campaign.

The present Legion building on 1st Ave. N.E. was opened in June, 1967.

Famous Local . . .

One former Swift Current man gained an international reputation during World War II.

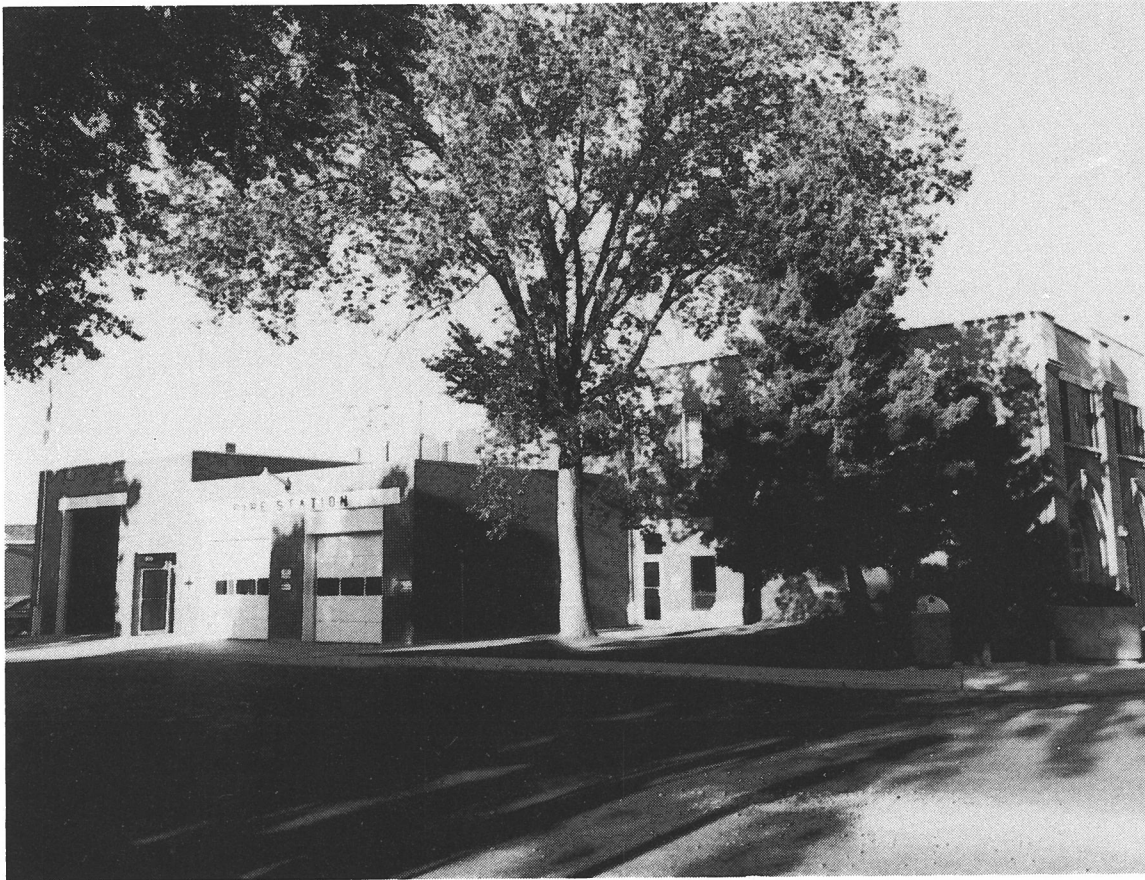
Kenneth C. Mann, son of Mrs. R.T. Graham, and later an associate professor at UBC, is credited with designing a radar set used by the Royal Navy for its motor torpedo craft. The sets were later installed in British and Canadian merchant ships for peacetime navigation.

The Hon. C.D. Howe revealed this in a



Vancouver speech, reported locally in the Sun, March 26, 1946. He said the radar allowed ship captains in the thickest fog or darkest night to see on

their electronic screens the coastlines and other ships as clearly as on a bright, sunny day. He called it a 100 per cent Canadian conception.



TODAY'S FIRE HALL COMPLETELY MODERNIZED.



FLAGS at city's gateway.



R.C. DAHL CENTRE HOUSES LIBRARY AND ART GALLERY



PICTURESQUE setting

Fires, floods, disease and storms

From its inception Swift Current has had its fair share of calamities, including diseases, fires, blizzards, floods and others, each affecting the community in some way.

From the annals of the Sun newspaper we can sketch examples of these circumstances.

In the early days, fires seemed to dominate the calendar of community life. Most buildings were wood frame and susceptible. For example, several

livery stables burned because of careless men sleeping in the lofts or open flame lanterns or inefficient chimneys sparking a start.

Swift Current wasn't quick off the mark to provide fire protection. Efforts to have a fire hall had met with resistance of property owners wherever it was located. It wasn't until 1908 that Town Council decided to purchase and build a permanent fire hall and in 1909 council presented a \$12,000 bylaw to

purchase a chemical engine fire truck.

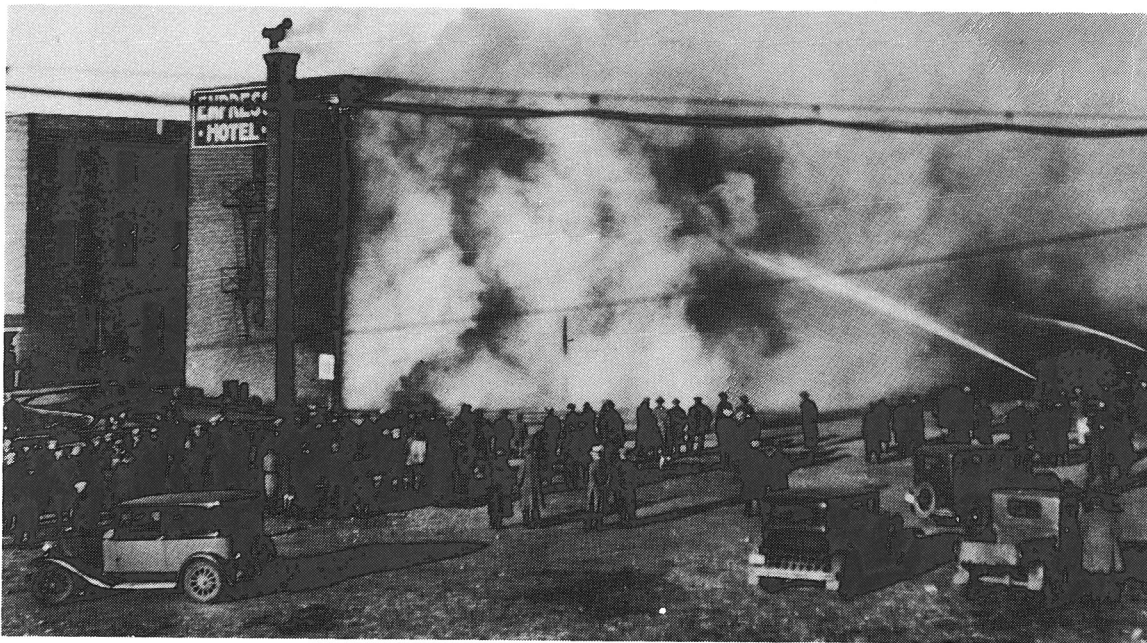
In 1907 town council had ordered four blocks of the main business section to be protected, buildings to be made only of brick, cement or concrete. The same year the town became a city, 1914, a fire alarm system was put in operation. And, on March 15, 1921 the city's new motor fire engines was given its first test run and the city had completed its reorganization of the fire department.

Some major fires

GATHERING POINTS -- The CPR dining hall burned in the early 1900s and Immigration Hall on Railway Street went in 1906. Other early community stopping points lost to fire were Hill Gregory's grocery store in 1912; Sykes' Piano Parlours in 1929; the Castle Cafe in June 1941; the smoke so thick the downtown was blacked out; and the Elite Cafe, built by John Booker in 1908, destroyed in February 1957.

WIPED OUT -- There were tremendous economic repercussions when a blaze wiped out the Great Northern Supply Co. and International Lumber and Elevator in 1911. Damage reached \$150,000, a huge figure for the times, and hundreds of citizens were put to work with firemen to saving other buildings in the downtown area.

GRAND HOTELS -- In 1909 the Reliance Hotel burned with arson suspected, but the accused was



THE EMPRESS Hotel burned to the ground on Christmas Day, 1931 sending billowing black smoke through the

downtown. Noticeable that December 25th day was a lack of snow.

acquitted after two trials. Six months later a mysterious explosion knocked out a wall of the Reliance.

The Empress Hotel burned to the ground December 25, 1931.

INSTITUTIONS -- In 1916, the drill hall for the 209th Battalion burned. Telephone service in Swift Current was struck a blow on February 24, 1917 when fire destroyed the exchange building. On May 30, 1919, the city's power plant was ablaze, the electricity out for five days. City offices, located in the original Beatty Collegiate, burned with the loss of one life January 10, 1921. A prisoner in the police cells, also located there, died from smoke and heat.



THE GREAT Northern Supply building was destroyed by fire in June, 1911. Here we see the fire wagon racing for more water.

The Metropolitan Church burned in 1947 with an interesting twist to the story. Found in the rubble was a time capsule, laid in 1912 and meant to be opened 400 years hence with a rusted coin, newspapers, etc., enclosed. The box would be relaid in the United Church cornerstone to stay preserved for another 353 years. The Southwest Abilities Centre was severely damaged May 15, 1986.

One of the finer entertainment places, the Princess Theatre, with an exciting history, located where the present Elks

Lodge is, was so badly damaged by fire in 1950 the building was condemned, then demolished. The next year the Elks Hall burned, which was struck again April 29, 1960.

THE BIG FIRES -- The Standard Motors fire of December 22, 1964, with over \$1 million damage, was one of Swift Current's worst. About 100 cars, \$30,000 in tires and goods, were destroyed, described by firefighters as the "worst holocaust" in the city's history. The blaze lit up the sky and exploding paint cans flew two city blocks. The Legion of Frontiersmen are credited with assisting the department at the height of the blaze.

Two firefighters and the Fire Chief were injured when Western Motors burned November 14, 1952, an explosion re-started the fire after it was

under control.

A spontaneous combustion fire brought down the old Revelstoke Hardware store at Cheadle and 1st N.W. The K-Motel, in 1964, had 12 units destroyed with damage to the restaurant, banquet room and kitchen. Great West Motors was struck in 1964. In 1971 Jackson Motors caught fire, causing \$80,000 damage. November 9, 1972 the Woolworth's Store on Central avenue was destroyed by an explosion, followed by fire, a tremendous fire of the time. Firefighters were caught inside Cindercrete Block Manufacturing on October 17, 1974 when the roof collapsed. Minor injuries resulted. \$250,000 damage resulted in 1982 when Holmes Meats on Railway was destroyed.

The Beverley Apartments on 2nd N.W.



GREAT DAMAGE was caused the W.W. Cooper department store in 1926 although fire fighting techniques were

ever-improving. Flames have eaten away most of the second floor.

fell in 1985. In 1988 Pioneer Co-op's Farm Service Centre on Cheadle W. was destroyed and was re-built that year and 1989 at the Wheatland Mall, re-opening this spring. . The Farm Centre had been previously hit by fire in 1971, causing \$175,000 damage.

Prairie Fires

Prairie fires struck fear on the land when they hit and every able-bodied man was put to work, often rounded up by the Mounties. One example was a fire in 1909 that started near the Sandhills and swept a wide swath north of Swift Current in the Stewart Valley area, jumped the creek and burned its way almost to Moose Jaw. Another, on the Matador Ranch in the 20s burned for two or three days. Prairie grass fires weren't just in the past. In 1968 volunteers were called out to fight a fire which reached the city's northwest boundary, advanced by 77 mph winds, the fire moving at 20 mph.

As if prairie fires weren't enough, an earthquake struck the land on May 15, 1909 with two shocks of 30 seconds each, felt from Medicine Hat to Winnipeg.

Disease

Anthrax attacked the sheep of the famed '76 Ranch in the 1880s, so debilitating it forced shareholders to start winding down the affairs of the ranch. Anthrax wasn't the only disease of the time. Typhoid moved in several times, taking numerous victims. The world flu of 1918 struck in Saskatchewan and Swift Current with difficult results. At one point, 26 cases were lodged at the Lyric Theatre for lack of nursing help. A citizens health and relief committee was formed and



LUMBER YARD fires were frequent as in the above two photographs. In one the offices were also destroyed. Lumber

was in great demand during the city's boom years.

gathering places shut down as cases, and deaths, mounted. 100 cases or more were counted with numerous deaths and the district suffered even more. Ponteix having 17 deaths alone.

Storms and such

Prairie weather is renowned. Through the years, some examples of its strength. In July 1900 an immense hail storm struck the district, winds hurling stones through windows and the grain crop covered in ice. Not one bushel of

grain was harvested in the district that fall.

People in the Riverdene areas sought refuge in a small church when the creek flooded in March 1918 taking the Piper bridge out and moving the Reid bridge off its piles. A similar situation took place in April, 1952 with a flood to the Riverdene, Ashley Park and Piper's Addition areas causing residents to be evacuated on a voluntary basis. Even as recently as 1986 this same area has seen flooding.

A bolt of lightening was blamed for a fire at the Dominion Experimental Station on September 22, 1931. An extensive hail storm struck the area September 1, 1942 causing massive damage. A flash flood hit the downtown area on August 27, 1965 with some streets having a foot of water. Freak winds and thunderstorms hit the city in July 1975, blowing out two ends of the Civic Centre. Another summer storm hit the next year causing a \$1 million damage and injuring 19.

BRONCO BUS CRASH

Forever in our memory

Numbers 8, 9, 11 and 22 would never again be worn by players of the Swift Current Bronco Hockey Club.

These sweaters were last worn by Trent Kresse (8), Scott Kruger (9), Brent Ruff (11) and Chris Mantyka (22) whose lives were tragically lost Tuesday, December 30, 1986 when the team bus crashed just east of the city.

The news of this disaster spread quickly through the city, stabbing like a knife, felt by everyone, young and old, fan or not.

Ambulance crews, police and passing motorists transported injured players and personnel to the Union Hospital. By 5:00 p.m., the hospital's emergency ward was jammed. Of the 28 on board, four were killed, three seriously injured and many others had minor injuries. Hospital staff were praised in their handling of the crisis.

About 3,500 people, including players from throughout the Western and Eastern Hockey Leagues, gathered to pay tribute to the four young men at a

memorial service in the Civic Centre. Brent Ruff was the youngest at 16, Scott Kruger and Chris Mantyka were 19 and Trent Kresse, 20. Trent and Scott were home grown boys.

From this tragedy came the Bronco Memorial Education Fund with hundreds of citizens and organizations contributing.

This modern-day tragedy will be remembered forever in the annals of Swift Current's history.



Healy Hotel: one of the grand buildings

1989

*Healy
history
ends*



Newspaper history in city

Recording Swift Current's history, as it happened, when it happened, has been the staff of its newspapers.

Through the pages of those papers were printed the progress, decisions, lifestyle changes, the good and the bad times. On those pages, to a large extent, are the people who built the community and the record of growth.

For example, comparing editions of the early Sun and the former paper, the Herald, gives one a scope of the changing cost of goods, the changing styles and emotions.

A few years before city status, Swift Current had three newspapers -- the Sun, Express and Weekly News. Later there was also the Herald, which folded in the thirties. Only the Sun survived over the years, the paper making it through the Dirty Thirties by often bartering advertising for food and other goods to pay its employees and meet its expenses.

Rancher W. Milwarde Yates brought Swift Current the Sun in 1903, printed at first from Maple Creek where Yates had bought the Signal. Seeing the growth potential of Swift Current he moved the paper here as a weekly giving it a home on lower Central. Judge Smythe bought the paper in 1906, later editor Sam Moore took over, then Moore brought on editors Jim Greenblat, then Dave Belbeck, both popular, both who had worked for the opposition at one point.

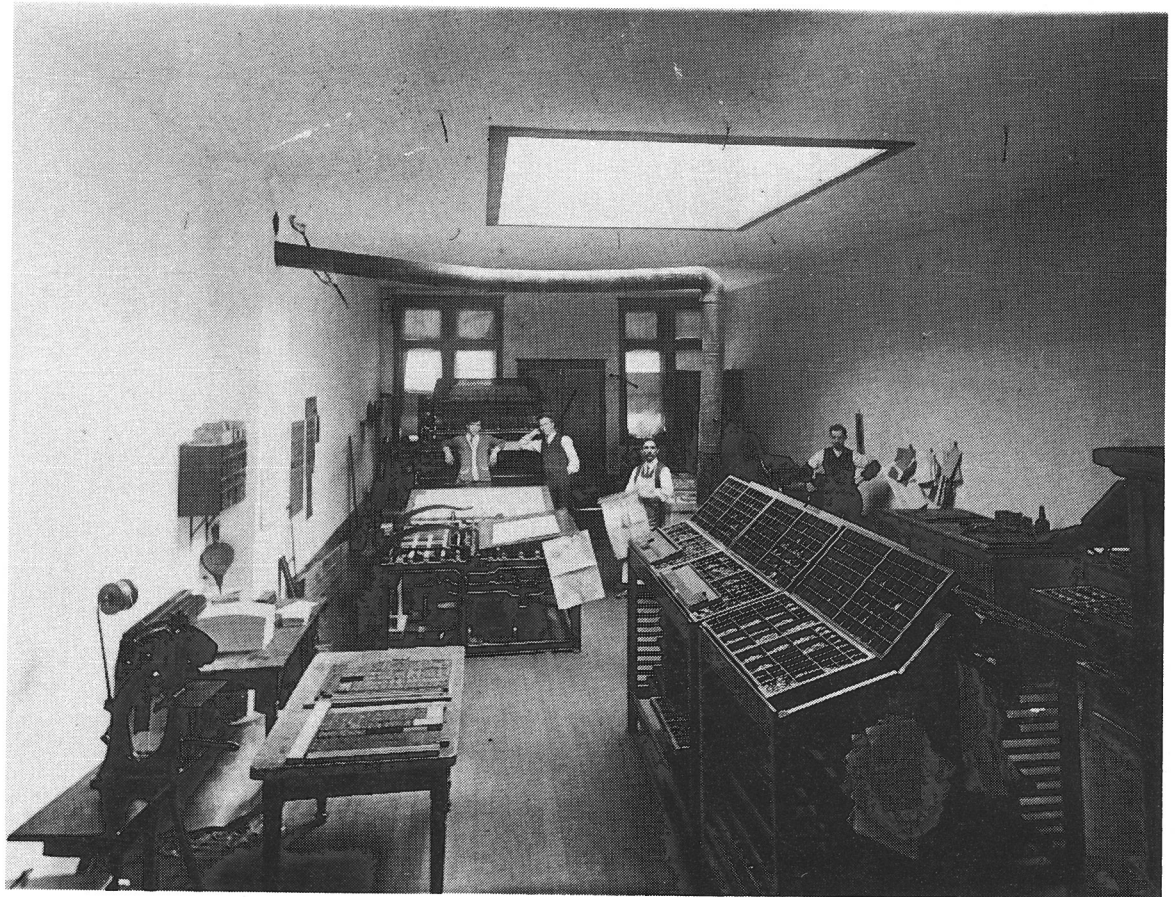
These men were fine writers, true believers in Swift Current and constant reporters of the Swift Current scene.

The Sun remained in local hands until 1966 when it was sold to the Thomson organization.

Also in the late sixties, the Southwest Booster came on the scene and another

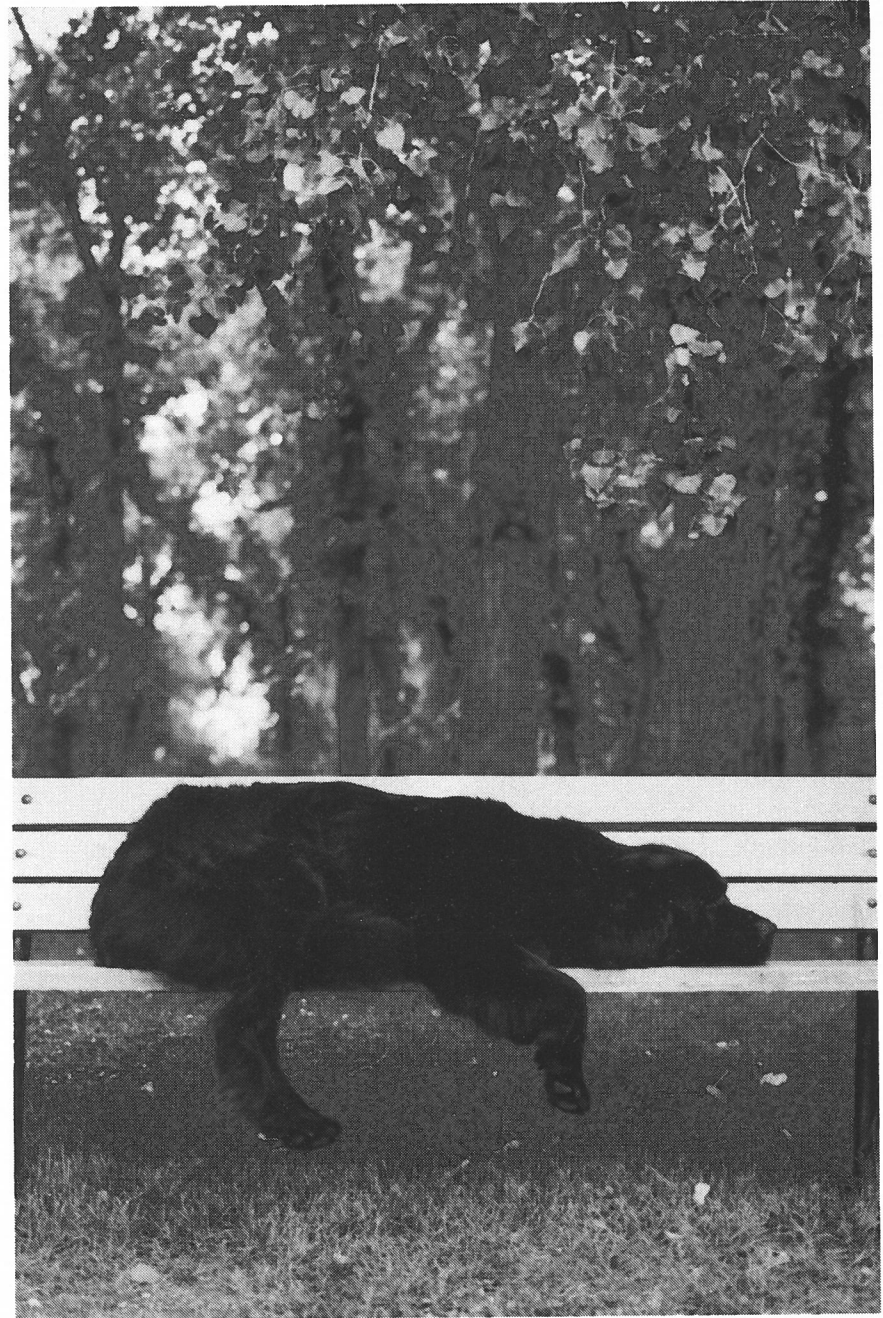
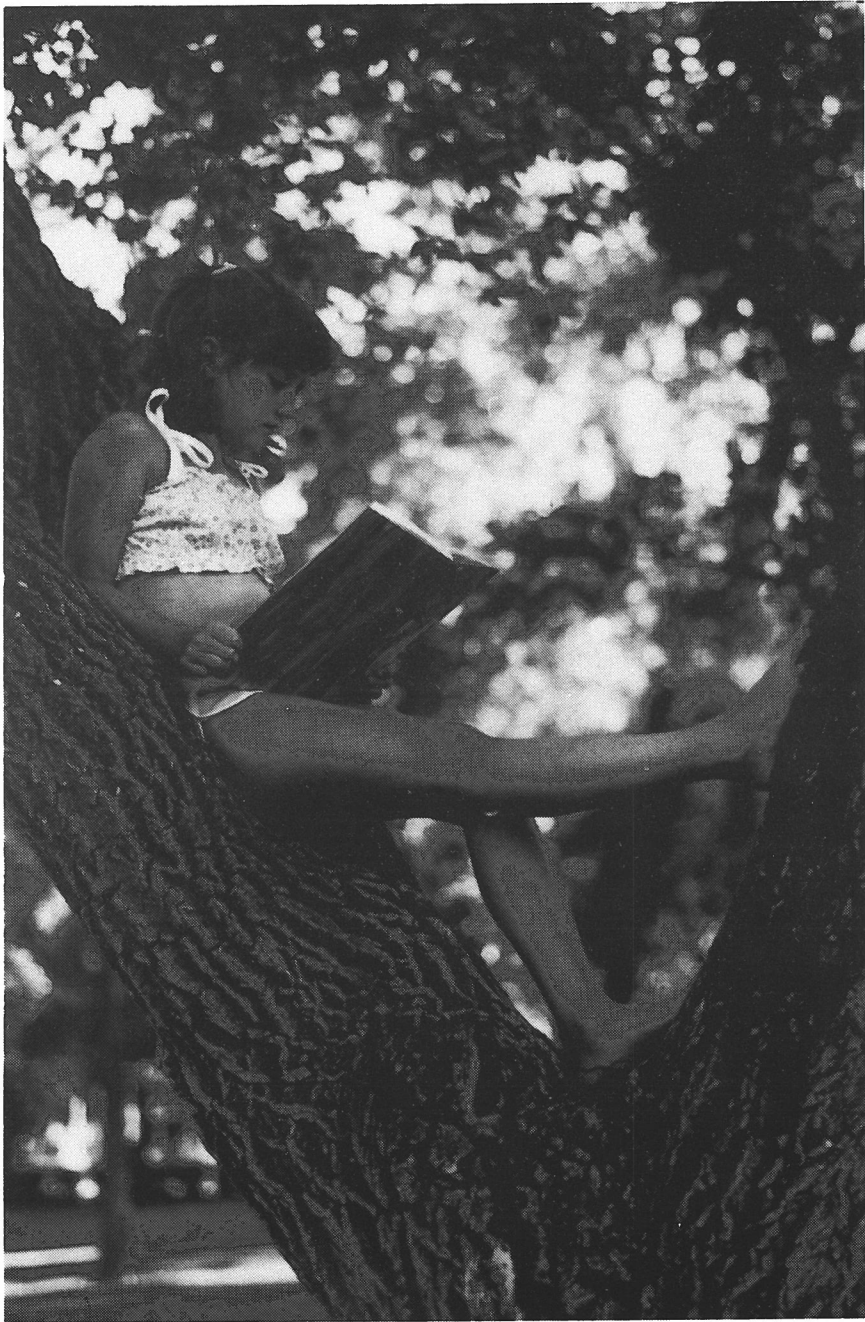
record, through its advertising columns and later some news columns, was set for the city.

Through all the papers Swift Current's lifestyle, from the rowdy cowboy days until now, and its achievements, are noted forever for all to review and study.



PROBABLY the print shop at one of the early Swift Current Sun locations, with

dozens of bins for lead lettering and an old press in the background.



LEISURE TIME IN SWIFT CURRENT

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